

Organizational Readiness for HRIS Integration in Support of Merit-Based System: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study examines how organizational readiness for change has been conceptualized in supporting Human Resource Information System (HRIS) integration and merit system implementation within public sector organizations. Despite the growing adoption of HRIS to support transparent and evidence-based personnel management, existing research has largely examined organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit systems as separate streams of inquiry. This systematic literature review, covering publications from 2000 to 2025, analyzed twenty-five studies retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using thematic synthesis. The review identified five recurring themes: leadership and management support, change commitment and change efficacy, organizational capacity and digital capability, governance and data integration, and merit-based human resource governance. The findings demonstrate that HRIS integration should be understood as a multidimensional organizational change process rather than a purely technological initiative. Organizational readiness functions as a critical enabling condition influencing whether HRIS integration can be successfully institutionalized and translated into merit-based system implementation. Based on these findings, the study proposes a conceptual framework positioning organizational readiness as the organizational mechanism linking HRIS integration and merit-based systems in the public sector. This article contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of digital transformation and human resource governance by integrating three previously fragmented bodies of literature and provides a foundation for future empirical research in public organizations undergoing administrative and human resource reform.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become one of the defining characteristics of contemporary public administration. Governments across the world are increasingly expected to deliver public services that are efficient, transparent, accountable, and supported by reliable information systems. Beyond improving administrative efficiency, digital transformation has also reshaped how public organizations manage information, coordinate activities, and make decisions (Mergel et al., 2019; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). As a result, digital technologies are no longer viewed merely as operational tools but as integral components of public sector governance and organizational reform.

Within the field of public human resource management, these developments have contributed to the growing adoption of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) and electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM) practices (Afriyie, 2019). HRIS enables organizations to collect, store, process, and utilize personnel information to support various human resource functions, including recruitment, performance management, competency

development, career planning, talent management, and workforce analytics (Elugbaju et al., 2024; Tasleem, 2025). In public organizations, the availability of integrated personnel data is increasingly regarded as a prerequisite for evidence-based human resource management and accountable personnel governance.

The strategic importance of HRIS has become more evident as governments seek to strengthen merit-based personnel systems (Ikhwan-Kurnia, 2026; Valcik et al., 2023). Merit systems are designed to ensure that personnel decisions are based on objective criteria such as qualifications, competencies, performance, and professional achievements rather than political affiliation, personal relationships, or other non-merit considerations (Meyer-Sahling & Mikkelsen, 2016; OECD, 2020). Effective implementation of merit principles requires access to accurate, consistent, and continuously updated personnel information. Consequently, integrated HR information systems are increasingly expected to support transparency, fairness, and accountability in public sector human resource management.

However, the existence of HRIS does not automatically guarantee the implementation of merit-based governance. Studies on public sector digital transformation repeatedly show that the introduction of information systems often produces uneven results across organizations. While some organizations successfully institutionalize digital systems and integrate them into everyday administrative practices, others experience fragmented implementation, limited system utilization, poor interoperability, and continued reliance on manual processes (Mergel et al., 2019). These variations suggest that technological infrastructure alone cannot fully explain the success or failure of digital transformation initiatives.

The literature on HRIS and e-HRM increasingly recognizes that digital HR systems should be understood as socio-technical and organizational phenomena rather than purely technical innovations. Strohmeier (2007) argues that e-HRM involves the application of information technology to support interactions among organizational actors engaged in HR activities. Similarly, Bondarouk and Brewster (2016) emphasize that HR technologies influence organizational coordination, communication, governance arrangements, and managerial decision-making. From this perspective, HRIS integration represents an organizational transformation process that requires changes in routines, structures, responsibilities, and information-sharing practices.

This organizational perspective becomes particularly relevant in public sector contexts characterized by bureaucratic structures, formalized procedures, multiple stakeholders, and complex governance arrangements. Digital transformation initiatives often require organizations to adopt new ways of working, coordinate across units, establish common data standards, and redefine existing administrative processes. Consequently, the success of HRIS integration depends not only on technological capability but also on organizational conditions that enable change to occur and become institutionalized over time.

Organizational readiness for change provides a useful theoretical lens for understanding these conditions. Weiner (2009) conceptualizes organizational readiness as a shared psychological state in which organizational members are collectively committed to implementing change and confident in their collective capability to do so. This perspective highlights that successful implementation depends not merely on formal decisions or technological investments, but also on the willingness and capability of organizational actors to support and sustain change initiatives. Subsequent studies further demonstrate that readiness

is influenced by leadership support, communication processes, organizational capacity, perceived appropriateness of change, and beliefs regarding implementation capability (Rafferty et al., 2013).

In public sector reform contexts, organizational readiness has been identified as an important determinant of implementation outcomes. Fernandez and Rainey (2006) argue that reform initiatives frequently encounter difficulties not because policy objectives are flawed, but because organizations lack sufficient readiness, capacity, leadership commitment, or institutional support to implement change effectively. Similar observations have emerged in studies of digital transformation, which highlight the importance of organizational alignment, governance capacity, stakeholder engagement, and institutional support in determining whether technological initiatives become embedded within organizational practices (Haug et al., 2024; Janssen & van der Voort, 2020).

Despite the growing literature in these areas, important conceptual fragmentation remains. First, organizational readiness studies have predominantly focused on change initiatives in general terms and have rarely examined HRIS integration as a specific form of digitally induced organizational change. Second, HRIS and e-HRM studies frequently emphasize adoption processes, implementation outcomes, service quality, or technological capabilities, while giving limited attention to the organizational conditions required to institutionalize integrated HR systems. Third, merit system scholarship largely concentrates on regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements, and personnel policies, with insufficient consideration of how integrated HR information systems support evidence-based personnel governance in practice (Hasibuan & Veri, 2025; Zhila et al., 2022).

As a result, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding how organizational readiness shapes HRIS integration as a mechanism for supporting merit-based human resource governance. Existing studies provide valuable insights into each domain independently, yet they rarely explain how readiness conditions influence the integration of HR systems and how such integration contributes to merit-based personnel management (Hildreth et al., 2021). This gap becomes particularly significant in public organizations managing complex career structures, where personnel decisions depend on the availability of integrated, reliable, and continuously updated human resource data (Wang, 2025).

This article seeks to address this gap through a systematic literature review of studies examining organizational readiness for change, HRIS integration, e-HRM, and merit system implementation in public sector contexts. Rather than treating these concepts as separate phenomena, the article develops an integrative perspective that positions organizational readiness as a key organizational mechanism linking HRIS integration and merit-based human resource governance. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive synthesis of three previously fragmented bodies of literature—organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation—within a unified analytical framework. By integrating these streams of research, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of how public organizations can successfully navigate digital transformation and strengthen merit-based governance. The study is guided by the following research question: How has the literature conceptualized organizational readiness for change in supporting HRIS integration and merit system implementation within public sector organizations? By answering this question, the article aims to synthesize fragmented literature, develop a conceptual framework explaining

the role of organizational readiness in enabling HRIS-supported merit governance, and provide a foundation for future empirical research examining digital transformation and human resource governance in public organizations.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine how organizational readiness for change has been conceptualized in supporting Human Resource Information System (HRIS) integration and merit system implementation within public sector organizations. The SLR approach was selected because it provides a transparent, systematic, and replicable procedure for synthesizing existing knowledge, identifying theoretical developments, and revealing research gaps within a particular field of study (Snyder, 2019).

Beyond summarizing previous findings, literature reviews can contribute to theory development by consolidating fragmented knowledge and proposing new conceptual perspectives. In this regard, the present study seeks not only to review existing literature but also to develop a conceptual framework explaining the role of organizational readiness in supporting HRIS integration and merit-based human resource governance.

Following the systematic review methodology proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) and further applied in management and public administration research, this study was conducted through two major stages. The first stage focused on article selection, while the second stage emphasized descriptive and content analysis of the selected studies.

Selection of Articles

The article selection process consisted of two sub-stages:

- a) Search: identifying keywords and selecting appropriate academic databases;
- b) Selection: applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify studies relevant to the research objective.

Descriptive and Content Analysis

After the final set of studies had been selected, the review proceeded to two analytical stages:

- a) Descriptive analysis: examining publication characteristics, research focus, methodological approaches, and theoretical perspectives;
- b) Content analysis: conducting an in-depth review of the selected studies to identify recurring themes, conceptual patterns, and theoretical gaps.

The content analysis further enabled the identification of dominant perspectives in the literature and facilitated the development of an integrative conceptual framework linking organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation.

Research Strategy

To provide a comprehensive review of the literature, searches were conducted across three major academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar. These databases were selected due to their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications in public administration, organizational studies, human resource management, information systems, and digital governance.

The review focused on publications published between 2000 and 2025. This period was selected because it captures the emergence of digital human resource management, increasing adoption of HRIS in public organizations, and contemporary discussions regarding merit-based personnel governance.

The search strategy employed combinations of keywords representing the three core concepts examined in this study:

- 1) Organizational Readiness for Change
- 2) Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) and electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM)
- 3) Merit System Implementation

The primary search strings included:

- “organizational readiness for change”
- “HRIS integration”
- “human resource information system”
- “electronic human resource management”
- “e-HRM”
- “merit system”
- “merit-based human resource management”
- “digital transformation”
- “public sector human resource management”
- “civil service reform”

To ensure comprehensive coverage, keywords were searched within article titles, abstracts, and author keywords.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study applied several criteria to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected publications.

Studies were included when they:

- discussed organizational readiness, HRIS integration, e-HRM, merit systems, or closely related concepts;
- examined organizational or public sector settings;
- were published in peer-reviewed academic journals;
- provided conceptual, empirical, or analytical contributions relevant to the research objective;
- were available in full-text format.

Studies were excluded when they:

- focused exclusively on technical system development without organizational implications;
- examined information systems without relevance to human resource management;
- lacked conceptual relevance to organizational readiness, HRIS, or merit systems;
- consisted of editorials, conference abstracts, book reviews, or non-academic publications;
- were unavailable in full-text format.

Table 1. Practical Screening and Selection Criteria for the SLR

Criterion	Practical Screening and Selection Criteria
Main sector covered	Public sector organizations and government institutions
Timeframe covered	All years (2000–2025)
Availability	Full-text available online
Search location	Title, abstract, author keywords
Type of publication	Journal articles (research and review articles)
Type of study	Conceptual, empirical, and analytical studies
Research methodology	Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies
Language	English dan Indonesia

Search and Screening Process

The literature search initially identified 3,248 publications across the selected databases. Following preliminary screening, duplicate removal, and title and abstract assessment, 280 studies remained for further evaluation.

Subsequently, full-text articles were reviewed to assess their relevance to the research objective. Studies that did not explicitly address organizational readiness, HRIS integration, merit systems, or related public sector governance issues were excluded. Following the screening and eligibility assessment process, 25 studies were selected as the final dataset for analysis.

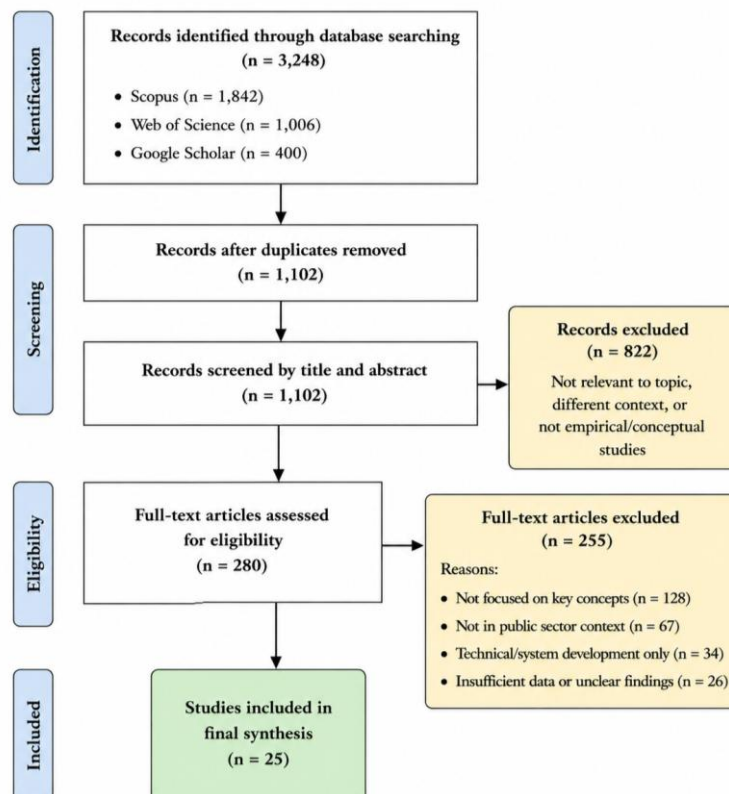


Figure 1. Process of Article Screening and Selection (PRISMA Flow Diagram)

Table 2. Search Strategy and Results Across Databases

Database	Initial Search	Limited by Time (2000–2025)	Relevant Titles	Non-Duplicate Titles	Relevant Abstracts for Extraction	Downloaded Full Texts	Final Set After Quality Assessment
Scopus	1,842	794	168	146	58	54	17
Web of Science	1,006	467	123	103	18	17	6
Google Scholar	400	211	77	69	10	9	2
Total	3,248	1,472	368	318	86	80	25

Data Extraction and Content Analysis

The selected studies were analysed through a structured data extraction process. Information collected from each article included authors, publication year, research objective,

theoretical framework, methodological approach, key findings, and recommendations for future research.

Following the approach adopted in previous systematic reviews, the extracted studies were subjected to descriptive and content analysis. The objective was not merely to summarize the literature but to identify recurring concepts and theoretical patterns emerging across different streams of research.

The content analysis generated five recurring themes:

1. Leadership and Management Support;
2. Change Commitment and Change Efficacy;
3. Organizational Capacity and Digital Capability;
4. Governance, Interoperability, and Data Integration;
5. Merit-Based Human Resource Governance.

These themes subsequently informed the discussion of theoretical gaps and the development of a conceptual framework explaining how organizational readiness supports HRIS integration in advancing merit system implementation.

The review therefore moves beyond a descriptive account of previous studies and seeks to provide a theoretical synthesis capable of informing future empirical research on digital transformation and human resource governance in public sector organizations.

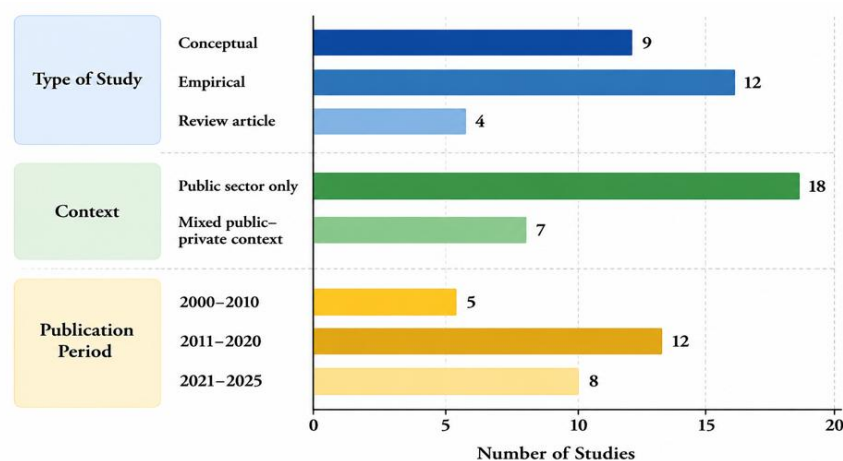


Figure 2. Characteristics of The Final Set of Studies (N = 25)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic review identified 25 studies addressing organizational readiness for change, HRIS integration, electronic human resource management (e-HRM), digital transformation, and merit-based human resource governance. Although these studies originate from different disciplinary traditions, several recurring themes emerged across the literature.

The findings suggest that organizational readiness remains a critical yet often overlooked factor in explaining the success of HRIS integration and its contribution to merit system implementation. While previous studies have extensively examined technological adoption, organizational change, and personnel governance as separate phenomena, relatively few have explored their interrelationship within a unified analytical framework.

Through thematic synthesis, five dominant themes were identified: (1) leadership and management support, (2) change commitment and change efficacy, (3) organizational capacity and digital capability, (4) governance, interoperability, and data integration, and (5) merit-based human resource governance. Together, these themes illustrate how organizational readiness influences the process of HRIS integration and ultimately supports merit-based personnel management in public organizations.

Table 3. Main Themes Identified from Content Analysis

No.	Theme	Focus of the Theme
1	Leadership and Management Support	Role of leadership commitment and managerial support in facilitating change and system integration.
2	Change Commitment and Change Efficacy	Employee willingness, change commitment, and confidence in implementing change.
3	Organizational Capacity and Digital Capability	Human resources, infrastructure, skills, and organizational capacity to adopt and use HRIS.
4	Governance, Interoperability, and Data Integration	Governance structure, data quality, interoperability, and cross-unit coordination.
5	Merit-Based Human Resource Governance	HRIS contribution to evidence-based decisions, transparency, and merit system implementation.

Organizational Change and Organizational Development

The reviewed literature consistently suggests that HRIS integration should be understood as a form of organizational change rather than merely a technological intervention. While information systems are often introduced to improve administrative efficiency, their implementation frequently requires organizations to redesign business processes, redefine roles and responsibilities, establish new coordination mechanisms, and adapt existing work practices. As a result, HRIS implementation often extends beyond technical deployment and becomes embedded within broader organizational transformation initiatives.

From an organizational development perspective, change is generally viewed as a continuous process through which organizations adapt to environmental pressures, institutional expectations, and evolving operational demands (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Within the public sector, digital transformation initiatives frequently require changes in organizational structures, governance arrangements, decision-making processes, and inter-unit coordination mechanisms (Mergel et al., 2019; Janssen & van der Voort, 2020). Consequently, the implementation of integrated HR systems often involves both technological and organizational adjustments.

Several studies indicate that resistance to change remains one of the most significant challenges in digital transformation initiatives. Employees may perceive new technologies as disruptive to established routines, threatening existing work patterns and reducing familiarity with organizational processes. These findings suggest that technological capability alone cannot guarantee successful implementation. Rather, organizations must simultaneously address behavioural, structural, and managerial dimensions of change.

A recurring pattern across the literature is the recognition that successful HRIS integration depends on the organization's capacity to align technological initiatives with broader organizational development objectives. Studies on digital transformation repeatedly emphasize that long-term system utilization is more likely when implementation efforts are

supported by organizational learning, leadership commitment, and institutional adaptation (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016; Mergel et al., 2019). In this regard, HRIS integration can be conceptualized as an organizational development process through which public organizations strengthen their capacity for data-driven human resource management and governance.

Taken together, the reviewed studies suggest that HRIS integration should not be viewed as a stand-alone technology project. Instead, it represents a strategic organizational change initiative requiring continuous adaptation, coordination, and institutional support. This perspective provides an important foundation for understanding why organizational readiness becomes critical in determining implementation outcomes.

Organizational Commitment and Change Commitment

One of the most frequently recurring themes identified in the literature concerns the importance of organizational commitment toward change initiatives. Across studies on organizational readiness, change commitment is consistently regarded as a central determinant of implementation success because it influences the willingness of organizational members to support and sustain change efforts.

Weiner (2009) argues that organizational readiness is reflected not only in an organization's capability to implement change but also in the collective commitment of its members to pursue change-related objectives. This distinction is particularly relevant in digital transformation contexts where employees are expected to adopt new technologies, develop additional competencies, and modify established work practices. Without sufficient commitment, technological initiatives may be formally implemented but fail to become institutionalized within daily organizational activities.

The reviewed studies indicate that change commitment is influenced by several organizational factors. Leadership support emerges as one of the most important drivers because leaders provide strategic direction, allocate resources, and communicate the rationale for change initiatives (Rafferty et al., 2013). Similarly, communication quality and employee participation contribute to stronger commitment by enhancing understanding of the change process and reducing uncertainty among organizational members.

The literature further suggests that commitment develops when employees perceive change initiatives as appropriate, beneficial, and aligned with organizational objectives. In the context of HRIS integration, commitment tends to increase when organizational members recognize the potential of integrated systems to improve information accessibility, reduce administrative burdens, and support more transparent personnel management practices. Conversely, limited understanding of system objectives may generate resistance and reduce implementation effectiveness.

Another important observation emerging from the reviewed studies is that commitment remains relevant beyond the initial adoption stage. Successful implementation often depends on the sustained use of systems over time rather than one-time deployment. Consequently, organizations characterized by strong change commitment are generally better positioned to maintain implementation momentum, encourage user engagement, and institutionalize new practices (Rafferty et al., 2013).

Overall, the literature suggests that change commitment functions as a critical mechanism linking organizational readiness and implementation outcomes. Organizations may

possess adequate technological resources and formal implementation plans, yet without collective commitment toward change, the integration of HRIS is unlikely to achieve its intended organizational objectives.

Organizational Readiness for Change

Among the themes identified in the reviewed literature, organizational readiness for change emerges as the most prominent explanatory factor influencing the implementation of organizational transformation initiatives. Although the concept has been interpreted from different theoretical perspectives, most scholars agree that readiness reflects an organization's collective preparedness to undertake and sustain change. Weiner (2009) defines organizational readiness as a shared psychological state in which organizational members are committed to implementing change and confident in their collective capability to do so. This definition has become one of the most influential conceptualizations in subsequent readiness research.

The literature demonstrates that organizational readiness extends beyond individual attitudes toward change. Holt et al. (2007) argue that readiness is shaped by perceptions of change appropriateness, management support, personal capability, and anticipated benefits. Similarly, Rafferty et al. (2013) emphasize that readiness develops through interactions between organizational context and employee perceptions. Together, these studies suggest that readiness is not a static condition but a multidimensional organizational capability that evolves throughout the change process.

Several recurring dimensions can be identified across the reviewed studies. Leadership commitment consistently appears as a critical factor because leaders provide strategic direction, allocate resources, and legitimize organizational transformation efforts. Communication also plays a central role by reducing uncertainty and helping employees understand the purpose and expected outcomes of change initiatives. In addition, organizational resources, employee involvement, and governance support frequently emerge as enabling conditions that strengthen organizational preparedness.

An important pattern observed in the literature is the close relationship between readiness and implementation outcomes. Organizations characterized by strong leadership support, clear communication, and high levels of collective efficacy generally report smoother implementation processes and greater acceptance of organizational change. Conversely, implementation challenges often arise when employees perceive limited managerial support, insufficient resources, or uncertainty regarding organizational priorities.

This observation becomes particularly relevant in the context of digital transformation. Unlike short-term change initiatives, digital transformation often unfolds over an extended period and requires continuous organizational adaptation. As noted by Mergel et al. (2019), successful digital transformation depends not only on technological investments but also on the organization's capacity to continuously learn, adapt, and coordinate change efforts. In this regard, organizational readiness functions as an ongoing capability that supports organizational adaptation throughout the implementation process.

Taken together, the reviewed studies suggest that organizational readiness provides a useful analytical lens for understanding why some public organizations are able to successfully implement and institutionalize digital transformation initiatives while others struggle to

achieve similar outcomes. This insight becomes particularly important when examining HRIS integration, which requires both technological capability and organizational preparedness.

HRIS Integration

The literature on Human Resource Information Systems has evolved considerably over the past two decades. Early studies primarily examined HRIS as a technological tool designed to automate administrative processes and improve operational efficiency. Strohmeier (2007), for example, conceptualized electronic human resource management (e-HRM) as the application of information technology to support HR activities and interactions among organizational actors. More recent studies, however, increasingly recognize that HRIS integration involves organizational, managerial, and governance dimensions that extend beyond technological deployment.

Across the reviewed studies, HRIS integration is commonly associated with efforts to improve data quality, facilitate information sharing, support workforce planning, and strengthen decision-making processes. According to Bondarouk and Ruël (2009), integrated HR systems contribute to organizational effectiveness by enhancing the availability and accessibility of personnel information across different HR functions. As organizations become increasingly data-driven, the ability to consolidate information from multiple sources has become a strategic capability rather than merely a technical requirement.

Despite these potential benefits, successful integration remains challenging. Heeks (2006) observes that many public sector information system initiatives fail not because of technological limitations but because of organizational and institutional constraints. Similar findings are reported in digital government studies, where fragmented databases, inconsistent data standards, limited interoperability, and insufficient user capabilities frequently hinder integration efforts (Janssen & van der Voort, 2020). These challenges demonstrate that technological infrastructure alone cannot guarantee successful implementation.

The reviewed literature further indicates that organizational readiness plays a central role in determining integration outcomes. Leadership commitment, employee engagement, governance arrangements, and organizational capacity repeatedly appear as factors influencing whether HRIS becomes fully embedded within organizational routines. As Bondarouk and Brewster (2016) argue, HR technologies generate value only when they are effectively integrated into organizational processes and decision-making practices. Consequently, HRIS integration should be viewed as a socio-technical transformation that requires alignment between technology, organizational structures, and human actors.

A notable finding emerging from the literature is that HRIS integration increasingly serves governance purposes rather than purely administrative functions. Integrated systems provide reliable personnel information that can be used for workforce planning, performance management, competency mapping, talent development, and strategic decision-making. Within public organizations, these capabilities become particularly important because personnel decisions are expected to be transparent, accountable, and evidence-based.

From this perspective, HRIS integration represents more than a technological modernization initiative. It constitutes a strategic organizational process that strengthens information management capacity and creates the conditions necessary for more effective human resource governance.

Merit System Implementation

The merit system occupies a central position in contemporary public sector human resource management. At its core, the merit principle seeks to ensure that personnel decisions are based on objective considerations such as qualifications, competencies, and performance rather than political affiliation, personal relationships, or other non-merit factors. As noted by Meyer-Sahling and Mikkelsen (2016), merit-based personnel systems are closely associated with professionalism, administrative effectiveness, and public sector integrity.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that effective merit system implementation depends heavily on the availability of accurate and reliable personnel information. Decisions related to recruitment, promotion, competency development, performance evaluation, and career progression require comprehensive information regarding employees' qualifications, experiences, and achievements. Without reliable information, organizations may encounter difficulties in ensuring consistency, transparency, and accountability in personnel management processes.

Interestingly, although studies on merit systems rarely focus explicitly on HRIS integration, a strong conceptual relationship emerges from the literature. Merit systems create governance demands that require organizations to manage personnel information systematically, while integrated HR information systems provide the infrastructure necessary to meet those demands. In other words, merit-based governance and HRIS integration appear to be mutually reinforcing rather than independent organizational processes.

The review also suggests that merit system implementation is influenced by broader organizational conditions. Beyond regulatory compliance, successful implementation depends on leadership commitment, institutional support, organizational capacity, and information quality. OECD (2020) highlights that merit-based public employment systems require not only appropriate regulatory frameworks but also organizational mechanisms capable of producing credible and accessible personnel information. This observation reinforces the importance of information systems within merit-based governance arrangements.

A recurring theme across the literature is the growing emphasis on evidence-based personnel management. As public organizations increasingly rely on data to support decision-making, integrated personnel information becomes a critical resource for ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability. Consequently, the effectiveness of merit systems cannot be fully understood without considering the organizational and technological infrastructures that support them.

Overall, the reviewed studies suggest that merit system implementation should not be viewed solely as a regulatory or administrative issue. Rather, it represents a governance outcome shaped by the interaction between organizational conditions, information systems, and managerial practices. This perspective provides an important foundation for understanding how HRIS integration contributes to merit-based human resource governance in public organizations.

Answer to the Research Question

This review sought to answer the following research question: How has the literature conceptualized organizational readiness for change in supporting HRIS integration and merit system implementation within public sector organizations?

The findings indicate that organizational readiness is generally conceptualized as a critical organizational condition that shapes the success of change initiatives, including digital transformation and information system implementation. Building on Weiner's (2009) seminal work, readiness is commonly associated with collective commitment and shared confidence in an organization's ability to implement change. Subsequent studies have expanded this perspective by highlighting the importance of leadership support, communication processes, organizational resources, employee involvement, and change efficacy in influencing implementation outcomes (Rafferty et al., 2013).

The review further demonstrates that HRIS integration is increasingly understood as a form of organizational transformation rather than merely a technological undertaking. While earlier studies primarily focused on system adoption and technical functionality, more recent scholarship emphasizes the interaction between technological infrastructure, organizational structures, governance arrangements, and human factors (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016; Janssen & van der Voort, 2020). Successful integration therefore depends not only on technological capability but also on the organizational environment within which change occurs.

In relation to merit system implementation, the literature consistently underscores the importance of reliable personnel information in supporting objective and evidence-based human resource decisions. However, studies on merit systems tend to focus on institutional arrangements, regulatory frameworks, and public sector reforms, while paying relatively limited attention to the organizational and technological processes through which personnel information is generated and managed (Meyer-Sahling & Mikkelsen, 2016; OECD, 2020).

Taken together, the reviewed studies suggest that organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation represent closely related yet largely disconnected streams of scholarship. Although each stream provides valuable insights independently, limited attention has been given to understanding how readiness conditions influence HRIS integration and how integrated HR systems subsequently support merit-based human resource governance.

Based on this synthesis, the review argues that organizational readiness functions as a critical organizational mechanism linking HRIS integration and merit system implementation. In other words, readiness creates the organizational conditions necessary for successful system integration, while integrated HRIS provides the informational foundation required for evidence-based and merit-oriented personnel management.

Theoretical Gaps

The review reveals several theoretical gaps that limit current understanding of the relationship between organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation.

First, organizational readiness research has traditionally focused on organizational transformation, reform initiatives, and change management processes in broad organizational settings. Although readiness has been widely recognized as an important determinant of implementation success since the work of Weiner (2009), relatively limited attention has been devoted to examining HRIS integration as a specific form of digitally induced organizational change. Consequently, the application of readiness theory within HRIS research remains underdeveloped.

Second, the HRIS and e-HRM literature has largely concentrated on technology adoption, implementation success factors, system utilization, and operational outcomes. While these studies provide important insights into technological and managerial dimensions of implementation, they frequently treat organizational readiness as a contextual factor rather than a central explanatory mechanism.

Third, merit system scholarship has predominantly examined institutional arrangements, civil service reform, regulatory frameworks, and personnel policies (Meyer-Sahling & Mikkelsen, 2016; OECD, 2020). Despite the increasing importance of digital technologies in personnel management, relatively few studies explicitly explore the contribution of integrated HR information systems to merit-based governance.

Perhaps the most significant gap identified through this review is the absence of an integrative framework capable of connecting these three streams of literature. Existing studies generally examine organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation separately, resulting in fragmented explanations of organizational change and governance outcomes. As a result, limited theoretical attention has been devoted to understanding how readiness influences HRIS integration and how integrated HR systems contribute to the realization of merit principles in practice.

These gaps suggest the need for a more comprehensive conceptual perspective that simultaneously incorporates organizational, technological, and governance dimensions. Addressing this gap provides an opportunity to advance understanding of digital transformation and human resource governance within contemporary public sector organizations.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Drawing upon the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework that positions organizational readiness for change as the central organizational mechanism linking HRIS integration and merit system implementation. The framework is built on three key observations emerging from the review. First, HRIS integration is consistently described as a form of organizational transformation that extends beyond technological deployment. Successful integration requires organizational adaptation, stakeholder engagement, governance support, and continuous capability development. Second, organizational readiness repeatedly emerges as the condition that enables organizations to undertake and sustain such transformation efforts. Third, integrated HR information systems provide the informational infrastructure necessary to support evidence-based personnel management and merit-based governance.

Accordingly, the proposed framework suggests that organizational readiness serves as an antecedent condition influencing the effectiveness of HRIS integration. Organizations characterized by strong leadership support, change commitment, communication effectiveness, governance support, and organizational capability are more likely to successfully integrate HR systems into organizational processes. Effective integration, in turn, enhances data quality, information accessibility, interoperability, and cross-functional coordination.

These improvements create the conditions necessary for more objective, transparent, and evidence-based personnel decisions. Consequently, merit system implementation can be understood not merely as a regulatory outcome but also as an organizational outcome shaped by readiness conditions and successful information system integration. Rather than treating

organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation as separate phenomena, the proposed framework integrates them into a single explanatory perspective. In doing so, the framework offers a foundation for future empirical research examining how public organizations translate digital transformation initiatives into improvements in human resource governance and merit-based personnel management.

Unlike previous studies that examine organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit systems independently, this framework conceptualizes organizational readiness as the organizational mechanism through which HRIS integration contributes to merit-based human resource governance. This perspective extends existing readiness and e-HRM literature by introducing a governance-oriented explanation of digital HR transformation in public organizations.

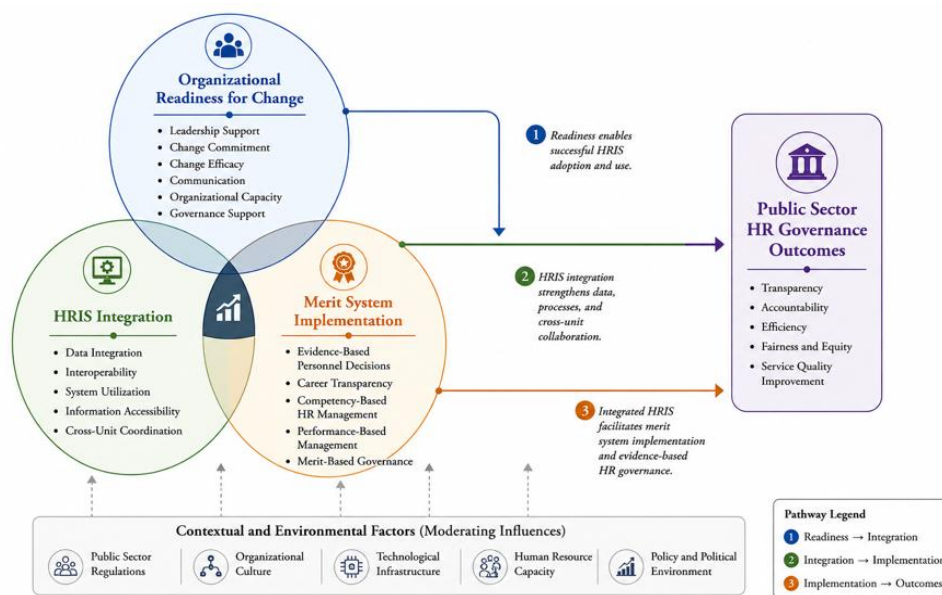


Figure 3. Proposed Conceptual Framework

Strengths, Limitations, And Future Research

This study contributes to the literature by bringing together three streams of research that have largely evolved independently, namely organizational readiness for change, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation. While previous studies have generated valuable insights within their respective domains, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how these concepts interact in supporting public sector human resource governance. By synthesizing findings across these bodies of literature, this review provides a more integrated understanding of the organizational conditions that enable digital transformation and merit-based personnel management.

A second contribution lies in the reconceptualization of HRIS integration as an organizational change process rather than merely a technological initiative. The review demonstrates that successful integration depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on organizational readiness, leadership commitment, communication, governance arrangements, and institutional capacity. This perspective broadens existing discussions on

HRIS implementation by emphasizing the organizational and governance dimensions of digital transformation.

The study also proposes a conceptual framework that positions organizational readiness as the organizational mechanism linking HRIS integration and merit system implementation. Unlike previous studies that tend to examine these concepts separately, the proposed framework offers an integrative perspective for understanding how public organizations translate digital transformation initiatives into improvements in human resource governance.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review focuses primarily on peer-reviewed journal publications and therefore may not fully capture insights contained in government reports, policy documents, technical reports, and other forms of grey literature. Given the practical nature of public sector reform and digital transformation, valuable knowledge may exist outside academic publications. Second, the study relies on conceptual synthesis and does not empirically test the proposed framework. Consequently, the relationships identified in this review should be interpreted as theoretically informed propositions rather than empirically validated findings.

These limitations provide opportunities for future research. Empirical studies are needed to examine how different dimensions of organizational readiness influence HRIS integration outcomes in specific organizational contexts. Future research may also investigate how integrated HR systems contribute to personnel decisions related to recruitment, promotion, competency development, performance management, and career progression. Comparative studies across organizations, sectors, and governmental settings would further enhance understanding of contextual factors that facilitate or hinder HRIS-supported merit system implementation. In addition, future studies could explore the applicability of the proposed framework in developing-country contexts where digital transformation and civil service reform are often implemented simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how the literature has conceptualized organizational readiness for change in supporting HRIS integration and merit system implementation within public sector organizations. Through a systematic review of twenty-five selected studies, the findings reveal that organizational readiness represents a critical organizational condition influencing the success of digital transformation initiatives and the institutionalization of integrated human resource information systems. The review demonstrates that HRIS integration should not be understood solely as a technological undertaking. Rather, it constitutes a multidimensional organizational change process that requires leadership commitment, change efficacy, communication, organizational capacity, governance support, and sustained stakeholder engagement. The findings further suggest that integrated HR systems serve as an important informational infrastructure supporting evidence-based personnel management and merit-based governance. More importantly, the review identifies a persistent fragmentation within the existing literature. Studies on organizational readiness, HRIS integration, and merit system implementation have generally developed as separate streams of scholarship, resulting in limited understanding of their interrelationship. Addressing this gap, the study proposes a conceptual framework that positions organizational readiness as the organizational mechanism through which HRIS integration contributes to merit-based human

resource governance. Theoretically, the study extends existing discussions on organizational readiness and digital transformation by introducing a governance-oriented perspective on HRIS integration. Practically, it highlights the importance of organizational preparedness as a prerequisite for realizing the governance benefits of integrated HR systems. These insights are particularly relevant for public organizations seeking to strengthen merit-based personnel management through digital transformation initiatives. Taken together, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of HRIS-supported merit systems depends not only on technological capability but also on the readiness of organizations to adopt, sustain, and institutionalize change. Future empirical research is therefore needed to examine how these relationships operate within specific public sector settings and to further validate the conceptual framework proposed in this study.

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