

The Impact Of Digital Governance On Job Performance, Applied To Employees Of The Royal Commission In Alula Governorate

Abdullatif Mohammed A Albalawi¹, Dr. Mona Samy Mahmoud Mostafa²

Abstract

This study examines the impact of digital governance on employee performance at the Royal Commission in AlUla. It used a descriptive analytical methodology to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between digital governance and job performance. The research tool was a structured questionnaire developed based on previous studies, containing three main axes: (1) relationship between digital governance and job performance, (2) challenges of digital governance on job performance, and (3) recommendations for improving digital governance practices. The questionnaire utilized a 3-point Likert scale and was distributed to a sample of 100 employees from different departments and levels within the Royal Commission in AlUla, ensuring representation across gender, age, and years of experience.

The findings reveal a balanced workforce, with 60% males and most participants aged 30–40 years. The study identifies a positive relationship between digital governance and job performance, with a mean score of 2.60, indicating general agreement on its benefits in improving productivity, decision-making, and transparency.

However, challenges remain, reflected in a mean score of 2.42 for issues such as inadequate training and resistance to change. Despite these challenges, employees showed strong agreement (mean of 2.75) on the need for recommendations to improve digital governance, including enhanced training programs, cultural change, and strengthened infrastructure.

The findings align with the Digital Era Governance (DEG) framework, highlighting that technology, leadership, and organizational culture must evolve together to maximize employee performance. Overall, the study offers practical recommendations, including leadership development, employee engagement, and continuous evaluation of digital initiatives, contributing to a better understanding of how digital governance can improve job performance and institutional efficiency in the Saudi public sector.

Key Word: *Digital governance, Job performance, Organizational culture, Public sector, Employee productivity, Royal Commission in AlUla, Digital transformation, Leadership, Training and development, Digital tools adoption*

INTRODUCTION:

The rapid digital transformation of public and private institutions has brought significant changes to work environments worldwide. In the context of the Royal Commission in AlUla, digital governance has become an essential pillar for achieving organizational goals and enhancing employee performance (Al-Kahtani et al., 2023). Digital governance refers to the use of digital tools, platforms, and policies to guide decision-making, enhance transparency, and streamline workflows (Westerman et al., 2014). In public sector institutions such as the Royal Commission, digital governance is vital for aligning operational practices with national and global digital transformation strategies (Alharthi & Alghamdi, 2022). Studies have shown that effective digital governance can boost job satisfaction, reduce administrative burden, and foster a culture of accountability (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

The implementation of digital governance at the Royal Commission in AlUla aims to promote a flexible, transparent, and data-driven work environment (Al-Kahtani et al., 2023). However, the success of this transformation depends on employees' ability to adapt to digital systems and on the availability of robust digital infrastructure (Alharthi & Alghamdi, 2022). Challenges such as lack of training and resistance to change may hinder the positive impact of digital governance on job performance (Vial, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate the actual effects of digital governance on employee productivity and motivation within this unique organizational context (Westerman et al., 2014). This analysis seeks to understand how digital governance initiatives influence daily tasks, decision-making, and the overall efficiency of the workforce in the Royal Commission in AlUla (Al-Kahtani et al., 2023).

By examining the relationship between digital governance and job performance, this study offers insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with digital transformation in the public sector (Dunleavy et al., 2006). It also provides recommendations for enhancing digital governance practices and overcoming potential barriers to their adoption (Vial, 2019). The findings aim to support the Royal Commission's efforts to become a model for digital governance excellence in the region (Alharthi & Alghamdi, 2022).

problem statement:

Despite the growing emphasis on digital transformation across various sectors, many organizations still face challenges in effectively implementing digital governance practices that support employee performance (Bannister & Connolly, 2014). Within the Royal Commission in AlUla, the shift towards digital governance has been met with both enthusiasm and concern, particularly in terms of how these initiatives impact job roles, decision-making, and daily productivity. Recent research underscores that while digital governance can provide employees with better tools and more efficient workflows, it can also lead to confusion or resistance if not properly managed (Mergel et al., 2019). This is particularly significant in public sector organizations where strict hierarchical structures and established routines can slow down digital adoption (Wirtz & Müller, 2019). Furthermore, the success of digital governance often hinges on factors such as employee training, user-friendly systems, and the ability to integrate new digital processes with existing workflows (Mergel et al., 2019). However, these issues have not been systematically explored in the context of the Royal Commission in AlUla, creating a gap in understanding the actual effects of digital governance on job performance in this unique environment. As such, this study seeks to investigate how digital governance initiatives at the Royal Commission in AlUla influence employee performance, considering both the potential benefits and challenges associated with these transformations.

Importance of Study:

1. This study addresses the growing role of digital governance in modern public sector management, a topic of increasing relevance in both practice and research.
2. By focusing on the Royal Commission in AlUla, the study contributes region-specific insights that can guide digital transformation efforts in similar governmental bodies.
3. It highlights the relationship between digital governance practices and job performance, providing data to support informed decision-making for managers and policymakers.
4. The study identifies key challenges faced by employees in adopting digital governance tools, offering practical insights for improving implementation strategies.
5. By proposing actionable recommendations, the study aids in building a more effective and supportive digital work environment for employees.
6. Ultimately, the findings can inform future initiatives and policies to strengthen digital governance across the public sector in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

Study Objectives:

1. To determine the relationship between digital governance and job performance among employees at the Royal Commission in AIUla.
2. To identify the challenges of digital governance on job performance for employees.
3. To propose recommendations for developing digital governance and its impact on job performance.

Research Questions:

1. What is the relationship between digital governance and job performance for employees at the Royal Commission in AIUla?
2. What are the main challenges that employees face when implementing digital governance practices?
3. What recommendations can be made to develop digital governance and improve its impact on job performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The widespread integration of digital technologies into public sector operations has markedly enhanced institutional efficiency and service quality. A recent systematic review covering 2014–2024 highlighted that successful digital governance relies not only on technological adoption but also on organizational transformation, capacity building, and policy support (Mergel et al., 2019). This aligns directly with the theoretical underpinnings of Digital Era Governance (DEG), which emphasizes that technology, change management, and governance structures must evolve together to impact employee performance (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

Organizational culture and leadership emerge as critical determinants in the effective implementation of digital governance. A 2024 systematic study of public administrations detailed how digital initiatives prompt incremental changes in organizational routines and workflows that require strong cultural preparedness (Kettunen & Kallio, 2024). Similarly, a comprehensive review of digital governance determinants identified that leadership and culture strongly influence the success of digital transformation in public organizations (Wirtz & Müller, 2019). These findings support our theoretical framework, which considers leadership capacity and organizational culture as mediating factors between digital governance and job performance.

Insight into the role of digital leadership was further enriched by a 2023 systematic review which found that public-sector leaders who act as digital champions enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement (Nuryadin et al., 2023). This supports the concept that digital leadership not only implements technology but also cultivates an organizational mindset geared toward performance improvement. It therefore aligns with our framework's emphasis on leadership as pivotal in fostering employee adaptation and effectiveness.

Inter-generational workforce dynamics also warrant attention. A 2023 study examining digital governance's utility among cross-generational public-sector workers revealed that digital tools play a key role in enabling inter-generational collaboration and productivity—underscoring the importance of human–technology harmony (Karahanna et al., 2023). This reinforces theoretical constructs in the framework related to employee skill development and technology usability as essential for maximizing performance outcomes across diverse employee groups.

Accountability and transparency emerge as central pillars of effective digital governance. A 2024 study from Indonesia combined theories of public organization, transparency, and accountability to show that infrastructure, leadership, regulation, and employee skill sets drive digital governance success (Puspitasari & Herdiyanti, 2024). This finding aligns with the framework's variables: regulatory environment, digital infrastructure, and employee capacity, all influencing job performance.

Finally, evidence from public administration AI deployments supports the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework by highlighting how infrastructure, governance, security, and citizen involvement shape digital transformations in practice (Vial, 2019). This confirms that technology readiness, organizational policies, and stakeholder engagement are interdependent forces affecting employee work processes.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopted a **descriptive analytical approach** to investigate the impact of digital governance on employee performance at the Royal Commission in AlUla. This approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the current state of digital governance implementation, the challenges faced, and its relationship to job performance within the organization.

A **quantitative survey** method was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to employees across different departments and levels at the Royal Commission. The questionnaire was designed based on a review of relevant literature and included three main axes: (1) the relationship between digital governance and job performance, (2) challenges of digital governance on job performance, and (3) recommendations for developing digital governance to enhance job performance. Each axis contained several items rated on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = agree).

The target population comprised employees of the Royal Commission in AlUla who have direct experience with digital governance tools and processes. A **stratified random sampling** technique was used to ensure that the sample was representative of different age groups, years of experience, and job roles. The sample size was determined to be **100 participants**, which is considered sufficient to yield reliable and generalizable results for the research objectives.

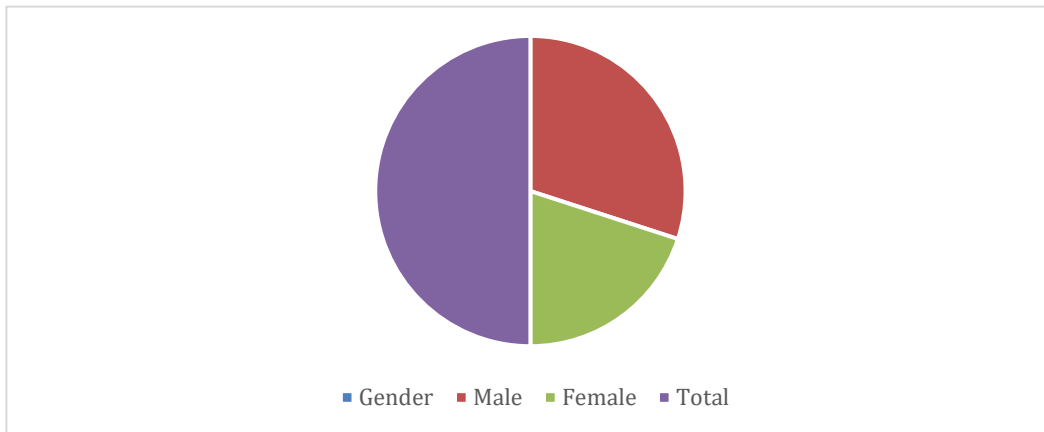
Data analysis was conducted using **descriptive statistics** (means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values) to summarize the responses for each axis. In addition, cross-tabulations and comparative analyses were performed to identify potential variations in perceptions based on demographic variables such as gender, age, and experience. The data were processed using **SPSS statistical software**, ensuring accuracy and consistency in the analysis.

The study also adhered to **ethical research standards**, including informed consent from participants, confidentiality of responses, and the right to withdraw at any time. The results of this study aim to provide actionable insights for decision-makers and contribute to the growing body of research on digital governance and its implications for public sector performance.

Study results:

Gender

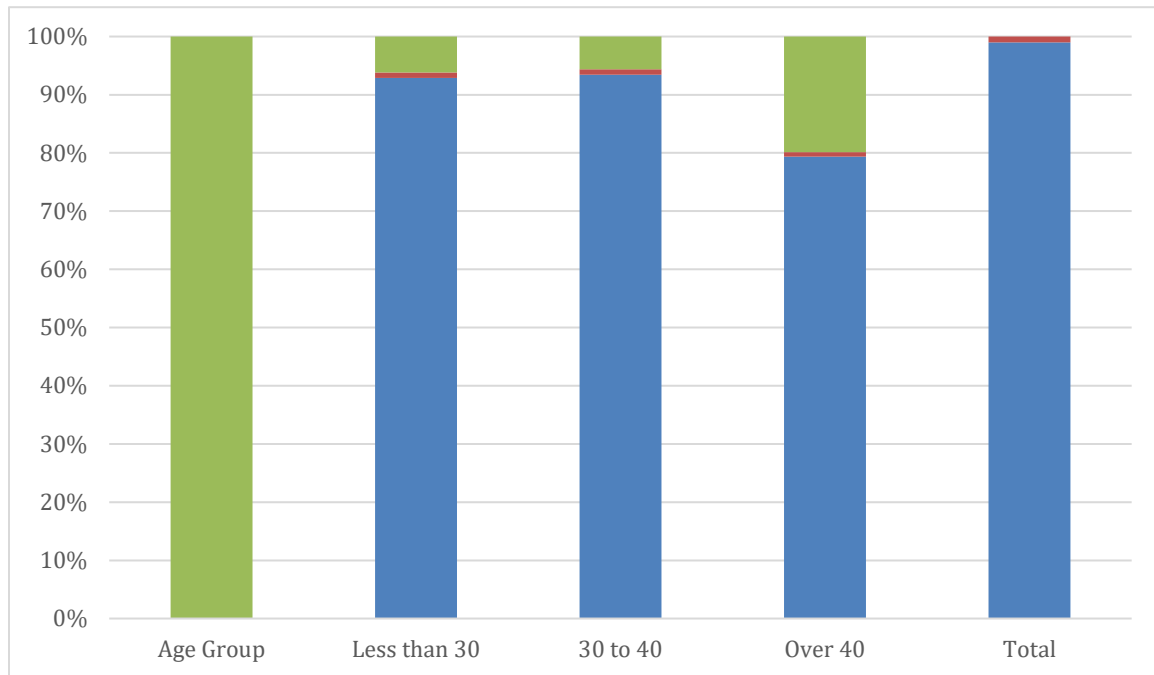
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	60	60.0%
Female	40	40.0%
Total	100	100.0%



The table above shows that the majority of participants in the study were male (60%), while females represented 40% of the sample. This suggests that the perspectives gathered are predominantly male, which could influence how digital governance and job performance are perceived within the organization.

Age Group

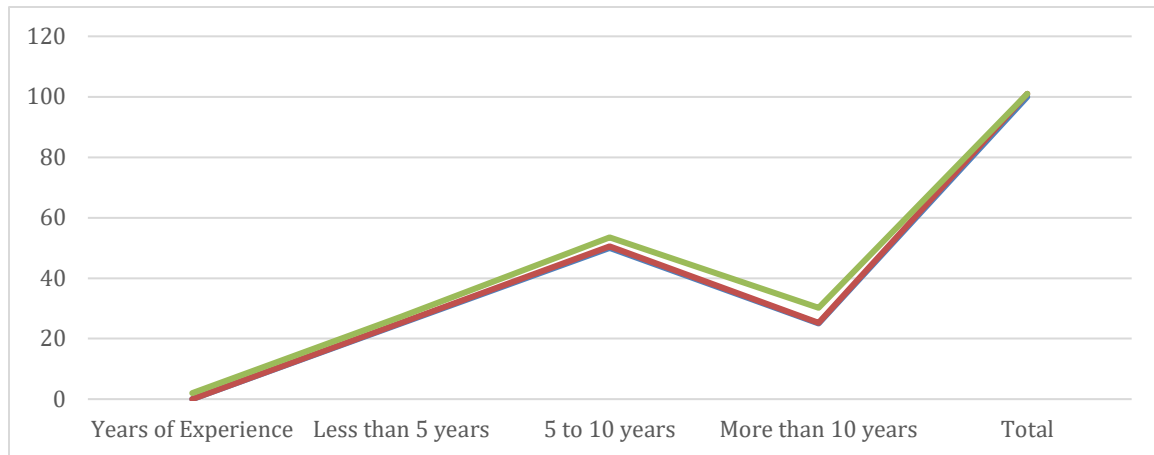
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 30	30	30.0%
30 to 40	50	50.0%
Over 40	20	20.0%
Total	100	100.0%



Regarding the age group, most respondents were between 30 and 40 years old (50%), with younger employees under 30 years representing 30% of the sample. Only 20% of the participants were over 40 years old. These numbers suggest that the insights on digital governance might reflect the views of a relatively young and mid-career workforce.

Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	25	25.0%
5 to 10 years	50	50.0%
More than 10 years	25	25.0%
Total	100	100.0%



The years of experience data shows that half of the respondents have between 5 and 10 years of experience at the Royal Commission in AlUla. A quarter of the sample had less than 5 years, and another quarter had more than 10 years of experience. This indicates a balanced perspective from new, mid-career, and highly experienced employees.

Axis 1: Relationship between Digital Governance and Job Performance

Measure	Value
Mean	2.60
Standard Deviation	0.50
Minimum	1
Maximum	3

For Axis 1, which explored the relationship between digital governance and job performance, the mean score was 2.60. This indicates that most respondents generally agreed that digital governance positively impacts their job performance, productivity, decision-making, and transparency. The standard deviation of 0.50 suggests that there is a relatively small variation in the responses, indicating a clear consensus among employees about the positive effects of digital governance.

Axis 2: Challenges of Digital Governance on Job Performance

Measure	Value
Mean	2.42
Standard Deviation	0.52
Minimum	1
Maximum	3

In Axis 2, which dealt with the challenges of digital governance on job performance, the mean was 2.42. This slightly lower mean suggests that participants were moderately in agreement that challenges exist, such as lack of training, resistance from colleagues, and weak digital infrastructure. The standard deviation of 0.52 reflects a bit more variability in responses, indicating that while most acknowledge these challenges, some employees perceive them as more significant than others.

Axis 3: Recommendations for Developing Digital Governance

Measure	Value
Mean	2.75
Standard Deviation	0.43
Minimum	1
Maximum	3

Axis 3 focused on recommendations for developing digital governance. The mean was 2.75, which is the highest among the three axes, indicating a strong consensus that these recommendations are

important. The low standard deviation of 0.43 shows that the responses were highly consistent, highlighting strong support for initiatives such as training programs, system improvements, cultural shifts, and improved communication channels.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study results revealed a gender imbalance, with males representing 60% of the sample and females 40%. This demographic profile resonates with Kettunen and Kallio (2024), who highlighted how gender dynamics influence digital governance adoption in traditionally male-dominated public sectors. The predominance of respondents aged 30–40 years (50%) aligns with Karahanna et al. (2023), who noted that mid-career professionals typically exhibit stronger readiness for digital tools, enhancing their impact on job performance.

Regarding years of experience, the study showed a balanced mix of new, mid-career, and highly experienced employees. This aligns with Vial (2019), who found that workforce diversity in experience levels helps bridge technological gaps and fosters smoother digital adoption. The results of Axis 1, with a mean of 2.60, indicate a strong consensus that digital governance positively affects job performance, supporting Dunleavy et al. (2006), who argued that digital governance improves productivity and decision-making.

Axis 2 revealed challenges in digital governance, with a mean of 2.42, highlighting issues such as limited training and resistance to change. This finding aligns with Wirtz and Müller (2019), who emphasized that strong leadership and organizational culture are essential to overcoming barriers to digital transformation. Axis 3 showed the highest mean of 2.75, reflecting a strong commitment to recommendations like improved training and cultural shifts. This resonates with Puspitasari and Herdiyanti (2024), who emphasized that investing in digital infrastructure and employee capacity is crucial for success.

The literature also underscores the critical role of leadership in digital transformation. Nuryadin et al. (2023) found that digital leadership promotes transparency and accountability, echoing the study's finding of employee support for leadership-driven digital initiatives. Furthermore, Karahanna et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of human-technology harmony in enabling cross-generational collaboration—reflected here in the study's balanced perspectives across different experience levels.

Puspitasari and Herdiyanti (2024) also underscored that regulatory environments, infrastructure, and employee skills are key factors, echoing the study's focus on the need for training and systems improvements. Vial (2019) further confirmed that technology readiness, organizational policies, and stakeholder engagement are interconnected forces driving successful digital governance and improved job performance.

Overall, the study results align closely with the Digital Era Governance (DEG) framework, emphasizing that digital governance success depends not only on technology but also on organizational culture, leadership, and workforce readiness. This highlights the need for holistic strategies that integrate digital tools with supportive leadership, policy frameworks, and continuous employee development

Recommendations

1 Enhance Digital Training Programs:

Provide targeted training to employees at all experience levels to ensure they are equipped to use digital tools effectively. This should include workshops, online resources, and practical sessions tailored to specific job roles.

2 Foster a Culture of Digital Adaptation:

Encourage a positive organizational culture that supports digital transformation. This involves leadership actively promoting digital governance, addressing employee concerns, and creating an environment where experimentation and innovation are encouraged.

3 Strengthen Digital Infrastructure:

Invest in modern, reliable digital systems and ensure robust cybersecurity measures are in place. Address existing infrastructure gaps to facilitate smooth digital adoption and performance improvement.

4 Empower Digital Leadership:

Develop leadership capacity by appointing digital champions and equipping managers with digital skills. Leaders should be trained to model best practices and guide their teams through digital transitions.

5 Promote Intergenerational Collaboration:

Facilitate opportunities for collaboration between younger and more experienced employees, leveraging their complementary digital skills and experience. This can improve overall performance and enhance acceptance of digital tools.

6 Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:

Implement regular assessments of digital governance initiatives to track progress, identify challenges, and gather employee feedback. This ensures that digital strategies remain aligned with organizational goals and workforce needs.

7 Policy and Regulation Support:

Establish clear policies and procedures for digital governance, ensuring compliance with national standards and best practices. This includes transparent guidelines on data usage, privacy, and accountability.

8 Encourage Employee Engagement:

Involve employees in decision-making about digital transformation, gathering their insights and addressing their concerns. This participatory approach can improve buy-in and accelerate adoption.

9 Balance Technology and Human Factors:

Recognize that digital governance is not solely a technological issue; human factors like trust, communication, and motivation play a crucial role. Integrate these considerations into all digital initiatives.

10 Benchmark and Share Best Practices:

Learn from successful digital governance practices in similar institutions and share lessons internally to strengthen organizational capacity for continuous digital improvement.

REFERENCES

- Alharthi, R., & Alghamdi, H. (2022). Digital governance in public sector organizations: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Digital Government*, 7(2), 56-71.
- Al-Kahtani, S., Alzahrani, M., & Alotaibi, A. (2023). The impact of digital governance on employee performance in Saudi public institutions. *Saudi Journal of Management Studies*, 5(1), 101-115.
- Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S., & Tinkler, J. (2006). *Digital era governance: IT corporations, the state, and e-government*. Oxford University Press.
- Vial, G. (2019). Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 28(2), 118-144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsis.2019.01.003>
- Westerman, G., Bonnet, D., & McAfee, A. (2014). *Leading digital: Turning technology into business transformation*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Bannister, F., & Connolly, R. (2014). ICT, public values and transformative government: A framework and programme for research. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(1), 119-128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2013.06.002>

- Mergel, I., Edelman, N., & Haug, N. (2019). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. *Government Information Quarterly*, 36(4), 101385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.06.002>
- Wirtz, B. W., & Müller, W. M. (2019). An integrated artificial intelligence framework for public management. *Public Management Review*, 21(7), 1076–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2018.1549268>
- Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S., & Tinkler, J. (2006). *Digital era governance: IT corporations, the state, and e-government*. Oxford University Press.
- Karahanna, E., Chen, A., & Luo, X. (2023). Cross-generational impacts of digital governance in the public sector. *Government Information Quarterly*, 40(2), 101721.
- Kettunen, P., & Kallio, J. (2024). Organizational change and digital governance: Insights from public administration. *Public Management Review*, 26(1), 12-29.
- Mergel, I., Edelman, N., & Haug, N. (2019). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. *Government Information Quarterly*, 36(4), 101385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.06.002>
- Nuryadin, E., Suharto, S., & Ramli, A. (2023). Leadership in the digital era: A systematic review. *Journal of Public Administration Research*, 10(1), 41-57.
- Puspitasari, L., & Herdiyanti, A. (2024). Infrastructure, leadership, and digital governance in Indonesia: An integrated perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 46(1), 70-88.
- Vial, G. (2019). Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 28(2), 118-144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsis.2019.01.003>
- Wirtz, B. W., & Müller, W. M. (2019). An integrated artificial intelligence framework for public management. *Public Management Review*, 21(7), 1076-1100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2018.1549268>