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Judicial Digital Sustainability: Unlocking Environmental Gains with Digital HR Strategies

Original Article

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Abstract

In the present day when sustainability and operational efficiency of every organization counts, more so the organizations in sectors that are inherently resource-intensive, e.g., judiciary, life without digital technologies stands out inconceivable. This article was aimed to investigates the relationship between digital human resource (HR) strategies and digital sustainability in the judiciary system of Pakistan. A quantitative technique was applied to gather the data related to research objectives from administrative and judicial staff through structured questionnaires. The research unveils a robust relationship between the diffusion of digitalized HR strategies and increases in digital sustainability, indicating great positive environmental and operating impacts. In addition, results of regression analysis show that the digital HR strategies have strong predicting power to digital sustainability. This research explains how the utilization of digital tools in HR activities can help companies to achieve broader sustainability aspirations, for example, reducing carbon footprint and hitting global sustainable development targets. Theoretical implications highlight the importance of social constructivism in driving digital innovations adoption, and practical recommendations suggest that judicial systems should embrace digital HR strategies to foster efficiency and sustainability. There remains scope for future research to investigate digital HR strategies in other industries as well as further factors such as employee engagement or digital literacy.

Keywords: Digital HR Strategy, Digital Sustainability, Judicial System of Pakistan, Unlocking Environmental Gains, Quantitative Research.

Introduction

Over the years, digital technologies had become quintessential tools in the arsenal for companies looking to realize their strategic objectives and remain competitive in a fast-changing commercial landscape (Nambisan, Wright, & Feldman, 2019). This resulted in reinventing the way companies operated by integrating digital strategies and created an entirely new perspective on how sustainability goals were tackled. The archival analysis revealed that digital transformation and sustainability were indeed the most widely spread topics by major consulting firms and governments which strategized the acceleration of the ongoing processes in terms of digitizing or becoming sustainable (Accenture Strategy & GeSI, 2016; Deloitte & GeSI, 2019; Gartner, 2019; PwC, 2018). Business models being reshaped by digitalization is a well-accepted phenomenon where businesses and governments competed under the so-called "digital imperative," to best capitalize on technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, to solve large societal challenges (George *et al*., 2020; Di Vaio *et al*., 2020; Merrill *et al*., 2019). Although sustainability is one of the major concerns faced globally, the articulation point of digital technologies and sustainability is yet partially examined (George *et al*., 2020; Merrill *et al*., 2019). This neglect remained unexpected considering the global approach of leading organizations to employ digital technologies to change economic, corporate, and social sectors while targeting societal problems throughout sustainability-relevant placements concerning communication, information transparency, and operational efficiency (Di Vaio *et al*., 2021). Companies were transitioning away from siloed-based, traditional approaches toward integrated process-driven models that use digital resources to provide differential value across all business functions (Ruiz *et al*., 2024; Bharadwaj *et al*., 2013). This digital transformation more likely tended to tap the most valuable and inimitable resource of most organizations, human capital (Barney & Wright, 1998).

While the benefits of digital HR systems are increasingly recognized (Legewie *et al*., 2016), relatively little had been published on the configuration and relationship between digital HR strategies and sustainability outcomes. Many studies have been conducted on how digital technologies can be used to make HR more efficient, for example in recruitment or employee engagement (Strohmeier, 2022; Marler & Fisher, 2013), but not as much research was carried out around the potential effects of individual digital HR practices on sustainability objectives. One of the researchers of this study had observed that empirical research on how digital HR strategies could aid sustainability was at a nascent stage, with a significant void especially in sectors that were still leveraging a lot of old practices, such as the judiciary. In Pakistan, hence, the reliance on paper-based processes of its judiciary led to a significant environmental impact arising out of energy usage and created an urgent need to change gears towards adopting HR approaches that were powered by digital eco-friendly strategies to enable sustainability (Shaikh *et al*., 2021). It was imperative to fill this lacuna of research by examining the effect that digital HR strategies could have on digital sustainability in Pakistan's judiciary. This study aimed to provide new empirical knowledge and practical insights, not least by investigating how digital HR systems could reduce environmental footprints and increase operational efficiency in alignment with international sustainability agendas. The research asks: in what way do digital HR strategies impact the realization of digital sustainability in organizations such as the judiciary?

The research represented a cornerstone literature by providing an overarching view of how digital HR strategies can influence operational and environmental sustainability. The article outlined how HR practices using digital tools improve paper consumption, data security, accuracy of processes and much more. It also highlighted the need for digital HR strategies to coexist better with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely point 12 responsible consumption and production, along Climate Action at point 13 on SDGs. The research presented here addresses that gap between traditional plus digital HR and sustainability with important implications for better, sustainable practices in judiciary other sectors interested in utilizing new technologies for operations.

Literature Review: Hypothetical Development and Theoretical Basis

Theoretical Basis

This study is based on social constructivist theory that emphasizes the idea that technology development, adoption, and use are governed by social and cultural processes rather than the inherent qualities of technologies (Pinch &

Bijker, 1984; Feenberg, 1991). This view takes exception to the deterministic perspective of technology, which assumes that its place and utility are largely determined by surrounding factors. This theory explains how digital HR strategies are influenced not only by industry norms, practices, or culture, but also how they, in turn, can influence organizations' behavior towards sustainable actions (Ward *et al*., 2006; Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016). Social constructivism may also provide powerful insights into the adoption of digital HR strategies within traditional judicial sector, where such practices as paper-based processes are highly rooted. To answer these research questions, this study takes up this theory as a lens through which to view both the social and organizational impediments of digital HR on the one hand, and its disruptive potential in operational efficiency as well as in sustainability in this industry on the other (Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Strohmeier, 2020). When examining the potential improvements or problems from digital HR tools as they are perceived and used by various actors within the justice sector upon which this research is focused in an interpretivist perspective, there is synergy with social constructivism, through particular focus on stakeholder engagement for efficient use of digital strategies (Bondarouk *et al*., 2017; Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). The paradigm further confirms the grounds for this transgression of praxis; innovative digital practices, delivering contextual and systemic sustainability (Ruiz *et al*., 2024), with respect to reduction of environmental footprints and enhancement of resource efficiency (Marler & Fisher, 2013), as potentially enabled by ILT applications in organizational change (Siddiqui & Fernandez, 2008), given that firms or industries respond to threats or target opportunities through change intervention.

Digital Human Resource Strategy

People agree that digital HR strategy blends some of the traditional processes and practices with newer options when it comes to creating powerful organizations that are performance-led, human, high-tech, and low-touch. This combines traditional HR activities with digital technologies to improve the way organizations deal with human capital. As Ruiz *et al.* (2024) explained, digital HR isn't just about automating traditional processes; it's about using tools to deliver HR business services more efficiently. It enhances other HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance management, and e-learning systems for workforce development. For example, Artificial Intelligence (AI) helps filter applicants in recruitment, while digital platforms support remote learning and employee engagement, promoting workplace flexibility and inclusivity (Fischer *et al*., 2020). Additionally, digital HR improves operational efficiency by saving time and resources. HR Information Systems (HRIS) enable departments to focus on strategic initiatives rather than manual tasks like payroll and benefits management. This integration of digital solutions helps minimize costs but enhances the pace and precision of HR functions (Ruiz *et al*., 2024). Additionally, the digital form of HR aligns with the larger agility journey that organizations are already on. The use of analytics to measure candidate fit/match and big data to manage talent and workforce planning creates a fact-based approach, supporting organizations to predict and map HR initiatives with their strategic goals (Sia *et al.*, 2021). Finally, digital HR strategy introduces significant business management values, such as service efficiency, enhanced employee experience, and the ability to connect the internal organizational structure with how the company operates in practice.

Digital Sustainability

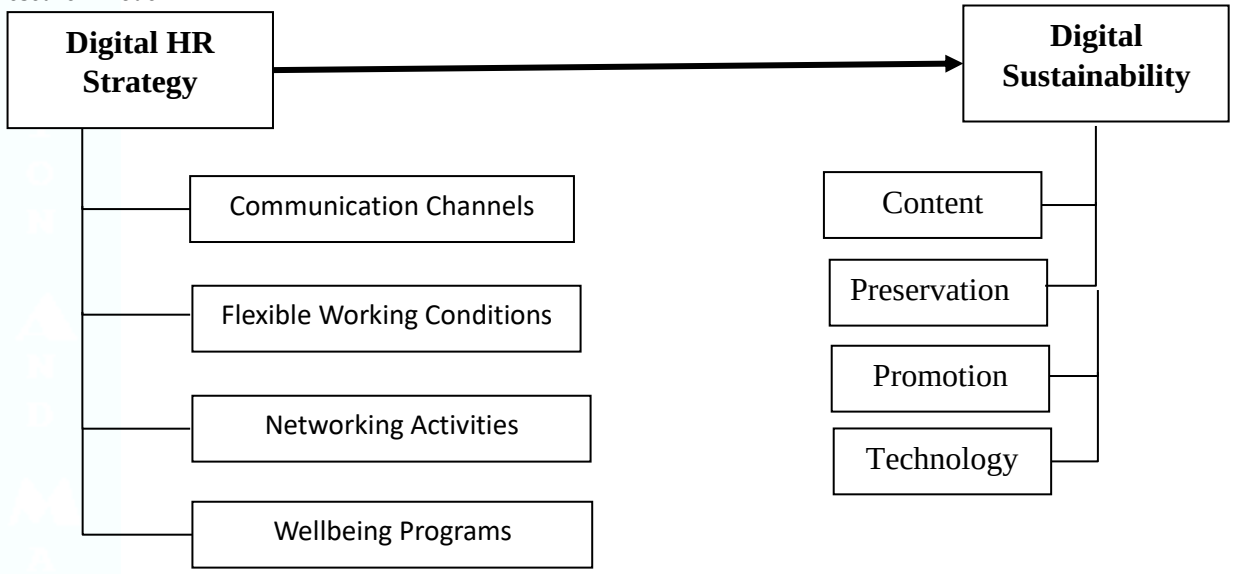
In terms of marginalization, people are moving away from a true radical green approach and into attitudinal capitalism, which acts as a facade, neglecting the importance of society while restoring parts of the economy that have been shut down. As Shouraki *et al*. (2024) summarize, "digital sustainability" serves as a metaphor, drawing an analogy to digital transformation by combining economic, societal, and ecological forces. Technologies are aiding in resource optimization, reducing environmental footprints, and simplifying business processes. According to Río Castro *et al*. (2021), digital sustainability involves using digital tools to achieve sustainable goals, such as content creation, maintenance, and visibility. Similarly, Williams *et al*. (2021) and Kamath et al. (2021) argue that integrating digital technologies into traditional sustainability practices revitalizes them by providing real-time data for energy monitoring and waste optimization. For instance, IoT-enabled sensors offer more accurate energy tracking than manual methods (Wut *et al.,* 2021). Digital sustainability bridges digital transformation and sustainability, reducing environmental footprints and improving societal welfare. Full transparency is crucial to operational efficiency and unlocking maximum sustainability benefits.

Digital Human Resource Strategy and Digital Sustainability

New technologies are revolutionizing traditional HR practices, transforming them into digital processes for managing human resources. This digital transformation involves implementing IT tools within HR functions to enhance organizational efficiency, beyond the typical alignment between HR and IT (Ruiz *et al*., 2024). Examples include cloud-based HR systems, AI recruitment platforms, and digital training solutions, which improve data accuracy, automate routines, build employee capabilities, and support better decision-making (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016). Companies like Unilever and Cisco have embraced digital HR interventions, such as social media hiring. Moreover, digital HR strategies boost efficiency and effectiveness, providing opportunities for HR capability development through automation across various functional areas (Fischer et al., 2020). Embedding digital tools into employee life cycle stages allows firms to align HR with business strategies, resulting in improved performance (Sia *et al*., 2021). Research shows that aligning IT and HR strategies enhances employee experiences, reduces operational costs, and improves decision-making, all of which positively impact organizational performance (Bharadwaj *et al*., 2013). A newer concept, digital sustainability, focuses on using digital technologies to balance economic, social, and environmental needs for long-term sustainability (Shouraki *et al*., 2024). As organizations face the dual challenges of digital transformation and sustainability, AI, big data analytics, and IoT sensors help monitor and optimize resource consumption, such as energy, emissions, and waste, in real time (Wut *et al*., 2021; Pereira *et al*., 2020; Setyaningrum & Muafi, 2022; Ejibe *et al*., 2024). Aligning digital sustainability with digital HR strategies improves operational efficiencies while meeting broader sustainability goals. For instance, AI enhances HR functions by boosting productivity, lowering costs, and ensuring business continuity (Chowdhury *et al*., 2023). IoT systems provide real-time data for recruitment, performance management, and employee well-being (Abdussamad *et al*., 2022). These technologies support not only HR targets but also environmental sustainability by reducing carbon footprints and promoting responsible resource management (Khan & Williams, 2020). Research shows that digital HR practices for sustainability purposes create an environmentally conscious and agile workforce, setting the foundation for future-oriented practices (Bondarouk *et al*., 2017). Global sustainability intersects with business operations by integrating environmental and social technologies through digital means (Williams & White, 2021). Therefore, organizational success in the digital age will depend on linking digital HR strategies with sustainability efforts.

Hypothesis H_1: *Digital HR strategy has positive relationship with Digital Sustainability.*
Hypothesis H_2: *Digital HR strategy has positive impact on Digital Sustainability.*

Figure 1
Research Model



Method

The study employed a systematic methodology to address the research problem. A quantitative descriptive research design using a survey tool was applied. Questionnaires were distributed to the administrative, clerical, and judicial staff of district courts in D.I. Khan (N = 344). The sample size of 185 was determined through simple random sampling and Yamane's (1967) formula. The main data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, adapted from Ruiz *et al.* (2024) for Digital HR strategy and Wut *et al.* (2019) for Digital Sustainability. The Digital HR strategy section contained 12 items focused on communication, compensation, flexible working, and networking, while the Digital Sustainability section covered 16 items on content preservation, technology use, and promotion. A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess respondents' agreement. Descriptive statistics summarized the data, while inferential statistics tested relationships between variables using SPSS version 26. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify data reliability, and regression analysis evaluated the effects of independent variables on dependent ones, providing insights into how digital sustainability impacts digital HR strategy.

Results and Findings

Table1

Data Normality

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis		Cronbach's Alpha
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	**α>0.7**	Std. Error	**α>0.7**
DHRS	185	3.4788	.72177	-.173	.179	-.184	.355	0.876
DS	185	3.4966	.74322	-.076	.179	-.616	.355	0.903

DHRS> Digital Human Resource Strategy; DS> Digital Sustainability

Table 1: Data Normality presents descriptive statistics for two variables: Digital Human Resource Strategy (DHRS) and Digital Sustainability (DS), based on a sample size of 185. The statistics include the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and Cronbach's Alpha for each variable. For DHRS, the mean is 3.4788, with a standard deviation of 0.72177. The skewness (-0.173, SE = 0.179) shows minimal left skewness, and the kurtosis (-0.184, SE = 0.355) indicates a flat distribution. The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.876 indicates strong internal consistency, exceeding the threshold of 0.7. For DS, the mean is 3.4966, with a standard deviation of 0.74322. The skewness (-0.076, SE = 0.179) suggests that the data is symmetrical, while the kurtosis (-0.616, SE = 0.355) indicates a flatter distribution.

The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.903 reflects excellent internal consistency. Overall, DHRS and DS demonstrate acceptable skewness, kurtosis, and high reliability, as shown by their Cronbach's Alpha values (α > 0.7).

Table 2

Correlation Analysis

		DHRS	DS
DHRS	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	n	185	
DS	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	n	185	185

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DHRS> Digital Human Resource Strategy; DS> Digital Sustainability

A Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between Digital Human Resource Strategy (DHRS) and Digital Sustainability (DS), with r = .842, p < .001, indicating that higher levels of DHRS are associated with higher levels of DS. This correlation was statistically significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). The sample size of n = 185 provided sufficient power to detect significant relationships.

These results suggest a meaningful connection between digital human resource strategies and digital sustainability. Hence, Hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Table 3

Regression Analysis Digital HR Strategy and Digital Sustainability

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	S. E	F	p
1	.842[a]	.709	.707	.4023	444.93	0.000
Summary		**B**	**S. E**	**β**	**T**	**p**
1	**(Constant)**	.481	.146		3.296	.001
	DHRS	.867	.041	.842	21.093	.000

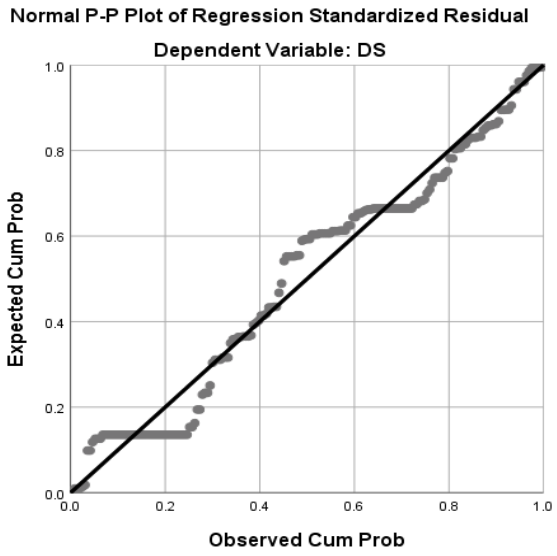
a. Predictors: (Constant), DHRS, Dependent Variable: DS

Regression results for Digital HR Strategy (DHRS) and Digital Sustainability (DS) are displayed in Table 3. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine if DHRS predicts DS. The model was statistically significant, F(1, 183) = 444.93, p < .001), indicating that DHRS is a significant predictor of DS. The analysis showed that the model explained 70.9% of the variance in DS (R^2 = .709, Adjusted R^2 = .707), implying that DHRS is a major contributor to the variation in DS. The unstandardized regression coefficient for DHRS was (B = .867, SE = .041), with a standardized coefficient β = .842, showing a strong positive relationship between DHRS and DS. For every one-unit increase in DHRS, DS is predicted to increase by 0.867 units.

The t-value for DHRS was 21.093, with a p-value of < .001, confirming its significance. In summary, DHRS significantly predicts DS with a strong positive effect, and the model accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in digital sustainability. Hence, Hypothesis H2 is accepted.

Figure 2

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



Discussion

The key result is a strong positive association between DHRS and DS in the state sectors of public justice. Digital HR also helps organizations to improve their digital sustainability. In this sense, the findings demonstrate how DHRS can increase ecological efficiency and operational efficacy by more successfully incorporating human resource practices with broader sustainability objectives. Results from the correlational analysis reveal a significant positive association between DHRS and DS, which suggests that combining HRM practices with digital support augments sustainability in judicature (see Table 4). Furthermore, the regression analysis indicates that DHRS is a predictor for DS, which supports an outcome of higher HR strategies improving organizational digital sustainability efforts (Setyaningrum & Muafi, 2022; Ejibe *et al*., 2023). Said results seem to confirm the advantages of digital transformation for fully digitized processes, as these are much more efficient and environmentally friendly than paper-based ones. This shift holds significance, especially in sectors like the judiciary, which are resource heavy. Researchers conclude that marketing and HR managers must introduce digital HR strategies to realize operational benefits and international sustainability goals. Digital tools affect responsible consumption, efficient use of resources, and sustainability in the judiciary, as well as streamline administrative processes (Ruiz *et al*., 2025; Böttcher *et al*., 2025).

Conclusion

Key takeaways for judiciary are implementation of Digital HR practices has substantial impact on both operational efficiency and sustainability in the Judiciary. This, therefore, makes HR activities very efficient UIs, you are moving from manual, paper-based systems to automated digital platforms thereby taking away a lot of paperwork and resources optimization. These are not just popular buzzwords but are key solutions that contribute to the bottom line, in addition to supporting sustainability goals such as climate action and responsible production. In addition to that, a Digital HR strategy alongside analytics allows for data-driven decision-making and strategic workforce planning. Rooted in social constructivist theory, the research argues that organizational culture and stakeholder engagement are important for effective implementation of these technologies. In the end, digital HR transformation involves a lot more than just an IT upgrade-it's critical for scaling out your business and growing it sustainably into the future.

Research Implications

Far more general than this, however, the study is essentially a wake-up call. Digital HR strategy lessens compliance pressures, drives faster case resolutions, and sharpens the focus on an agile workforce. This, in turn, also helps the judiciary save costs by eliminating paper-based and manual processes, making it more affordable. Similarly, it adds to the transparency and facilitates the e-release of confidential information, which improves judicial accountability.
Theoretical framework: social constructivist. This study is based on a social constructivist research paradigm, which has much to say about the role that organizational culture and norms may have in shaping how technology adoption happens within organizations. It leans into the fact that digital HR strategies work best when underpinned by buy-in from a spectrum of people. One of the major takeaways is that areas like the judiciary, which has evolved no more than incrementally for centuries, can be rejuvenated with technological innovation. This underscores the fact that digital transformation is more than just an IT project-it's the new girl on the block, making stakeholder participation and cultural change critical.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Using this as a foundation, future studies should also scaffold their work to investigate holistically the long-term sustainability for digital HR strategies in sectors such as the judiciary. This is the experience of one judiciary and may not be generalizable to other legal or organizational contexts. In addition, they emphasize operational efficiency and environmental sustainability, but tend to neglect employee satisfaction, digital literacy, and organizational culture. Routes dependent on the only employee engagement or digital proficiency and technology readiness likely mean that these are your only KPIs for success, which, in our opinion, gives us an incomplete view of how to track whether Digital HR strategies really work—using the known challenges of stakeholder resistance (this can be internal to HR functions, by the way). This is why we recommend consideration across more dimensions. By taking a closer look at

all these aspects along with digital sustainability, this could give a totally different picture to HR in terms of the benefits and challenges of digital transformation.

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Deceleration of Interest

The authors declare that there is no clash of interest.

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