

# Leadership Support as a Catalyst for Digital HRM Success: Linking Perceived Usefulness and Behavioral Intention

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## Abstract

This study delves into the relationship between leadership support, perceived usefulness, behavioural intention and the adoption of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) practices. The Data collected from 280 professionals working in various sectors in India was analysed using Smart PLS-4. Results reveal a strong positive correlation between leadership support and perceived usefulness, which, in turn, significantly influences the successful implementation of DHRM practices. The study further confirms the mediating roles of perceived usefulness and behavioural intention into digital HR adoption. By providing a nuanced understanding of these dynamics, this research offers valuable insights for organizations navigating the challenges of integrating technology into HR practices in the digital age.

**Key Words:** Leadership support, Digital Human Resource Management, Perceived usefulness, Behavioural intention

## Introduction

In the contemporary and ever-evolving landscape of organizations, Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) is not merely a passing fad but a pivotal catalyst for achieving success. Through the incorporation of digital technologies in HR methodologies, firms can provide customized assistance, particularly targeting neuro-diverse individuals, utilizing AI-driven resources and motivational tools such as interactive schedules (Spoor & Walkowiak, 2024). This digital transformation necessitates a sophisticated comprehension of employees' anticipations, attitudes towards alterations, and technical proficiencies to effectively address obstacles and ensure seamless integration (Elfindah Princes et al., 2024). DHRM not only rationalizes operations but also reshapes workplace mindsets and individual responsibilities, underscoring the significance of human factors in propelling digital evolution and enhancing organizational efficacy (Babayan, 2022; Ganeshan & Vethirajan, 2020; Varadaraj & Al Wadi, 2021).

Within the rapidly evolving landscape of contemporary businesses, the incorporation of technology in Human Resource Management (HRM) emerges as a pivotal driver for the achievement of organizational objectives (Chowdhury et al., 2023). The pursuit of competitiveness and flexibility has rendered Digital HRM practices indispensable (Hearne, 2023). These approaches, encompassing a variety of technological tools, seek to rationalize HR operations and enrich employee interactions, thereby fostering overall organizational efficacy (Kim et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the efficacy of technology assimilation in HR hinges not solely on the implementation of sophisticated systems but on the intricate interplay of diverse elements, with organizational endorsement emerging as a crucial determinant (Li et al., 2022).

Despite the widespread recognition of the essential role played by organisation support in the realm of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM), there exists a notable gap in comprehending the specific dimensions of support that influence the adoption of technology within HR functions (Strohmeier, 2020). The literature stresses the significance of organisation support while often lacking granularity on the kinds of support—such as training, resources, or leadership backing—that hold the most substantial influence (Theres & Strohmeier, 2023; Mdhlalose, 2023).

Moreover, many studies focus on the direct relationship between organisational support and technology adoption, without considering the possible indirect impact of individual perceived usefulness and the wider contexts of behavioural intention (Kemp et al., 2019). This study seeks to fill this void by examining leadership support as the specific element of organisational support that enhance the effectiveness of DHRM practices. It also considers mediating factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the organisational dynamics in the digital age. This study is highly relevant in the rapidly changing digital environment.

As the global workforce increasingly shifts to remote work and becomes heavily dependent on technology, HR functions are at the forefront of this transformation (Subramony et al., 2023; Nagpal et al., 2020). An in-depth understanding of the

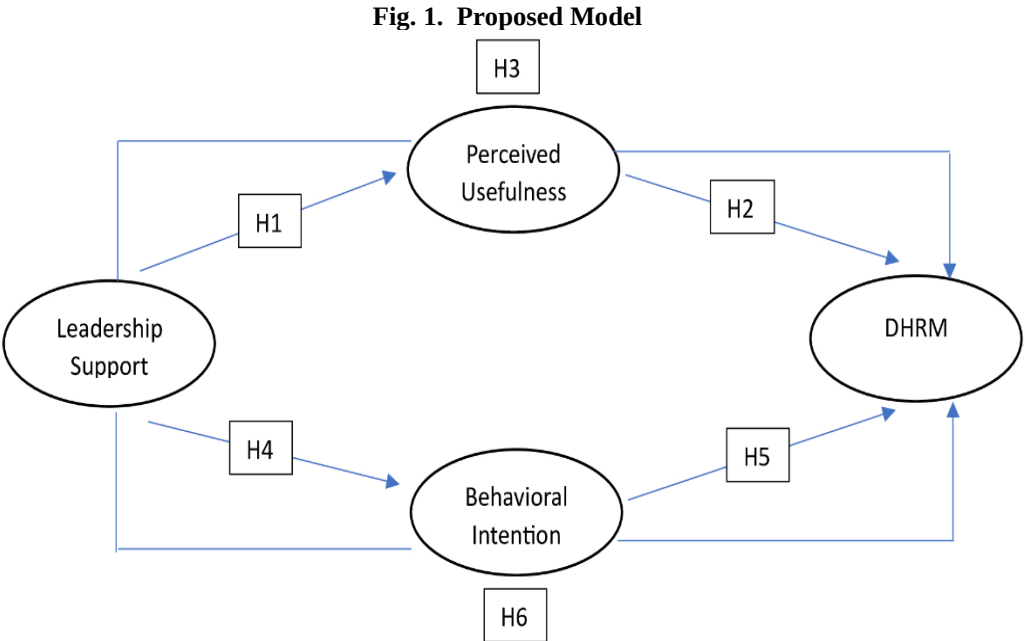
factors that contribute to successful DHRM practices can help organisations effectively navigate the digital landscape, leading to increased employee engagement, improved talent acquisition, and overall performance improvements (Halid et al., 2020).

**Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

The study is based on the theoretical framework of the Behavioural intention Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989). The theory suggests that the adoption of technology depends on the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as the main factors (Al-Adwan et al., 2023).

In the context of this study, the TAM framework is extended to explore the role of leadership support as a critical external variable that influences Perceived Usefulness. Leadership support, defined as the extent to which organizational leaders actively endorse and facilitate the use of digital HRM practices (Sulistiyo, 2023), is hypothesized to have a significant impact on employees' perceptions of the usefulness of these technologies.

Moreover, the study examines how this perceived usefulness, shaped by leadership support, influences employees' attitudes towards technology and their subsequent behavioural intention to adopt Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) practices. By integrating leadership support into the TAM framework, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving the successful adoption of digital HR technologies within organizations.



Source: Author’s own work

**Leadership support** refers to active participation and endorsement by senior leaders. Ensuring that digital HRM initiatives align with the organization’s strategic goal and managing and facilitating change during digital transformation (Chatterjee et al., 2024).

Research suggests that organisational support has a substantial impact on employee attitudes, behaviours, and performance (Li. et al., 2022; Singh, A. and W, N., 2024). Leadership styles like transformational, servant, and distributed leadership are crucial for driving technology adoption (Asaduzzaman, 2024)

**Perceived usefulness** is belief that technology will improve job performance and will make tasks easier and quicker. It is also the extent to which technology is seen as relevant to one’s role. (Zulqarnain et al., 2020). An empirical study conducted by Huang and Chueh (2022) found a significant correlation between individuals' Perceived usefulness and their intention to use mobile applications. Venkatesh et al. (2003) identified a direct correlation between individuals' Perceived usefulness and their acceptance and utilisation of technology.

**Behavioural Intention** refers to the likelihood of using the technology in the future. Eagerness to start using the technology immediately and dedication to fully integrating the technology into daily tasks (Taherdoost, 2018). Research

indicates that the intention to accept technology can have a significant effect on the success of implementing and adopting technology (Phan, 2011; Billanes et al., 2021).

**Digital human resource management (DHRM)** practices refer to the use of digital technologies for managing various human resources tasks, including recruitment, selection, training, and performance evaluation (Strohmeier, 2020). Research conducted by Tarique and Schuler (2010) has shown a clear and positive correlation between the implementation of DHRM practices and the overall performance of organisations. Literature indicates that implementing DHRM practices can result in enhanced organisational efficiency, heightened productivity, and improved competitiveness in the contemporary digital age (Halid et al., 2020).

## **Hypotheses Development**

### **Leadership support and Perceived usefulness**

Organisational support has a significant impact on how employees view technology, according to Sulistiyo (2023). Naujokaitiene et al. (2015) provided insight into how organisational support affects employees' willingness to embrace Technology Enabled Learning. Their findings revealed a direct correlation between higher perceptions of support and a positive attitude towards adopting technology. In a study conducted by Nguyen and Süß (2023), it was found that there is a direct correlation between enabling factors, such as organisational support, and employees' Perceived usefulness. Their findings emphasise that increased levels of support have a substantial impact on fostering favourable Perceived usefulness. In addition, the study conducted by Wang and Li (2021) presents a nuanced viewpoint, illustrating that organisational support serves as a highly effective safeguard against the adverse effects of techno-stress. Given the strong positive link between organizational support and attitudes toward technology, it is important to explore how leadership support contributes to fostering a perception of technology's usefulness.

#### **H1: Leadership support is positively related to Perceived usefulness**

### **Perceived usefulness and Digital Human Resource Management**

The increasing prevalence of technology in modern workplaces has led to a growing interest in researching the relationship between employees' Perceived usefulness and digital human resource management (DHRM).

A study conducted by Wang et al. (2022) suggests that employees who perceive higher levels of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) are more likely to have a positive attitude towards using technology in the workplace. Bhatta et al. (2023) found that the corporate digital culture acts as a mediator in the relationship between a company's adoption of technology and its sustainable performance.

DHRM practices exhibit enhanced levels of employee job performance (Umar et al., 2020) and operational efficiency (AL Hamad et al., 2022). The findings suggest that Digital HRM can positively influence employees' workplace perceptions, which, in turn, enhances their perceived usefulness of technology. By offering digital tools and resources for task management, DHRM practices can cultivate a more favourable work environment, potentially improving employees' perception toward technology. This leads us to our hypothesis:

#### **H2: Perceived usefulness is positively related to Digital Human Resource Management**

### **Mediating role of Perceived usefulness**

While organizational support has been shown to reduce the impact of techno-stress by enhancing perceived usefulness (Li and Wang, 2021), the role of leadership support in this context remains underexplored. Unlike organizational support, which provides a broad framework of resources and encouragement, leadership support offers more personalized and direct guidance, fostering a deeper sense of trust and confidence in the use of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) systems.

While previous studies have shown that attitudes mediate the relationship between organizational factors and technology adoption (Abdulghafor, 2022; Saidi et al., 2022), focusing on leadership support provides a new perspective. This study, therefore, aims to fill the gap by examining how leadership support, as opposed to general organizational support, impacts employees' perceived usefulness of DHRM, ultimately influencing their adoption and effective use of these systems.

#### **H3: Perceived usefulness mediates the relationship between Leadership support and Digital Human Resource Management**

### **Leadership support and Behavioural intention**

The adoption of technology in the workplace has been increasing, and the extent to which employees embrace and use technology can have a significant impact on the organization's success. Leadership support goes beyond the general provision of resources and focuses on direct, personalized engagement with employees. This type of support plays a crucial role in shaping employees' motivation and readiness to embrace new technologies (Lisa et. al., 2020).

Research has demonstrated that organisation policies like providing clear direction, offering encouragement, and demonstrating commitment to digital initiatives, can significantly enhance employees' willingness to adopt and utilize

new technologies (Molino et. al., 2020). While peer recommendations hindered the acceptance of technology (Na et. al., 2022).

This study, therefore, aims to explore how leadership support, specific element of organisation support directly correlates with behavioural intention.

**H4: Leadership support is positively related to Behavioural intention**

**Behavioural intention and Digital Human Resource Management**

An increasing amount of research shows a significant connection between the acceptance of technology and the adoption of technology. Giri et al. (2019) found that the willingness to adopt e-HRM has a positive effect on the efficient use of e-HRM. Islam et al. (2022) found that the intention to use AI-based technologies in recruitment has a direct impact on their actual adoption. Oamen (2023) emphasised the significance of behavioural intention in ensuring the effective utilisation of technology.

Therefore, by fostering employees' willingness to embrace technology, organisations can increase their rates of adopting DHRM practices and improve their overall effectiveness.

**H5: Behavioural intention is Positively related to Digital Human Resource Management**

**Mediating role of Behavioural intention**

32 constructs were studied to be linked to the phenomenon of DHRM usage. These constructs provide insights into the importance of organisational factors in promoting the adoption of DHRM and evaluating its effectiveness (Theres, 2021). Studies suggest that providing organisational support through Behavioural intention has a positive impact on technology utilisation (Kimiagari and Baei, 2022; Sukendro et.al., 2020).

Organisations can positively influence their employees' Perceived usefulness and increase the acceptance of technology by providing them with sufficient support and resources. This, in turn, can potentially lead to higher adoption rates of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) and improve the overall performance of the organisation.

**H6: Behavioural intention mediates the relationship between the Leadership support and Digital Human Resource Management**

**Research methodology**

Smart PLS 4 was employed to analyse the data and assess relationship between the variables of the study.

**Sampling**

The study targeted a diverse population of working professionals across various industries (Service, Educational Sector, Automobile, and IT) in India, ensuring a comprehensive and representative sample for meaningful insights from 280 working professionals.

**Scales of Measurement**

Study utilized a six-item scale called the Survey of Perceived Organisation support (SPOS), which was developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) replacing organisation with leader. Perceived usefulness was measured using Technology Attitude Scale (TAS) developed by Edison and Geissler (2003). The TAS is a comprehensive scale designed to assess Perceived usefulness. It encompasses five items that capture various dimensions of individuals' Perceived usefulness. Using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) introduced by Davis (1989) behavioural Intention was measured. We adapted a 16-item high performance work system measurement tool from Patel et al. (2013) to measure the companies' Digital HRM practices.

**Results and Discussion**

**Reliability and Validity**

The authors conducted an evaluation of the reliability and validity of the constructs in the measurement model, as described in Table 1 and supported by literature from Hair et al. (2010, 2016) and Vinzi et al. (2010). The measurement model was found to be reliable with most values exceeding the suggested 0.70 as shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1. Factor Loading, Reliability and Validity**

| Constructs              | Measurement Codes | FL   | $\alpha$ | $\rho_{\alpha}$ | CR | AVE |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------|----------|-----------------|----|-----|
| Leadership Support (LS) | LS 1              | 0.79 |          |                 |    |     |
|                         | LS 2              | 0.82 |          |                 |    |     |
|                         | LS 3              | 0.75 |          |                 |    |     |
|                         | LS 4              | 0.69 |          |                 |    |     |
|                         | LS 5              | 0.78 |          |                 |    |     |

|                                                 |         |      |             |             |             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                                 | LS 6    | 0.72 | <b>0.76</b> | <b>0.91</b> | <b>0.94</b> | <b>0.64</b> |
| <b>Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM)</b> | DHRM 1  | 0.78 | <b>0.83</b> | <b>0.89</b> | <b>0.93</b> | <b>0.53</b> |
|                                                 | DHRM 2  | 0.79 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 3  | 0.72 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 4  | 0.75 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 5  | 0.77 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 6  | 0.84 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 7  | 0.80 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 8  | 0.69 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 9  | 0.71 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 10 | 0.77 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 11 | 0.81 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 12 | 0.88 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 13 | 0.77 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 14 | 0.69 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 15 | 0.68 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | DHRM 16 | 0.71 |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Perceived usefulness (PU)</b>                | PU 1    | 0.44 | <b>0.91</b> | <b>0.93</b> | <b>0.95</b> | <b>0.58</b> |
|                                                 | PU 2    | 0.77 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | PU 3    | 0.73 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | PU 4    | 0.72 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | PU 5    | 0.76 |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Behavioural intention (BI)</b>               | BI1     | 0.72 | <b>0.83</b> | <b>0.91</b> | <b>0.93</b> | <b>0.62</b> |
|                                                 | BI 2    | 0.70 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | BI 3    | 0.78 |             |             |             |             |
|                                                 | BI 4    | 0.76 |             |             |             |             |

**Note(s):** AVE: Average variance extracted, CR: Composite reliability, LS: Leadership support, DHRM: Digital Human Resource Management, PU: Perceived usefulness BI: Behavioural intention

**Table 2 Correlation, Discriminant Validity through Fornell and Larcker**

|               | LS          | DHRM        | PU          | BI          | Age  | Gender |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|--------|
| <b>OS</b>     | <b>0.79</b> |             |             |             |      |        |
| <b>DHRM</b>   | 0.382       | <b>0.76</b> |             |             |      |        |
| <b>PU</b>     | 0.247       | 0.216       | <b>0.80</b> |             |      |        |
| <b>BI</b>     | 0.284       | 0.279       | 0.288       | <b>0.77</b> |      |        |
| <b>Age</b>    | 0.19        | 0.07        | -0.19       | -1.14       | -    | 0.63   |
| <b>Gender</b> | -0.18       | 0.007       | -0.16       | -0.06       | 0.17 | -      |

**Note(s):** LS: Leadership support, DHRM: Digital Human Resource Management, PU: Perceived usefulness BI: Behavioural intention

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity through HTMT**

|             | LS    | DHRM  | PU    | BI |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|----|
| <b>OS</b>   | -     |       |       |    |
| <b>DHRM</b> | 0.688 | -     |       |    |
| <b>PU</b>   | 0.567 | 0.581 | -     |    |
| <b>BI</b>   | 0.421 | 0.449 | 0.348 | -  |

**Note(s):** LS: Leadership support, DHRM: Digital Human Resource Management, PU: Perceived usefulness BI: Behavioural intention

### Structural Model

Structural path analysis supports the hypothesis H1, H2, H4 and H5 as depicted in Table 4.

**Table 4. Direct Relationship**

| Hypotheses    | Path Coefficient | Standard Deviation | T Statistics | P Value  | Decision  |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| H1: LS → PU   | 0.239            | 0.214              | 4.121        | 0.06*    | Supported |
| H2: PU → DHRM | 0.349            | 0.211              | 3.174        | 0.011**  | Supported |
| H4: LS→BI     | 0.341            | 0.264              | 3.618        | 0.000*** | Supported |
| H5: BI → DHRM | 0.221            | 0.321              | 4.361        | 0.006**  | Supported |

**Note(s):** LS: Leadership support, DHRM: Digital Human Resource Management, PU: Perceived usefulness BI: Behavioural intention \*\*\*p < 0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

### Mediation Analysis

Results indicates a notable indirect impact of Leadership Support (LS) on Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) through Perceived usefulness (PU) and Behavioural Intention (BI). Results depicted in Table 5.

**Table 5. Mediation Analysis**

| Total Effects (LS→DHRM) |                |             | Direct Effect (LS →DHRM) |                |                 | Indirect Effects of LS on DHRM |                 |        |                 |                 |                                                           |           |                                               |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Coeffi<br>cient         | T<br>val<br>ue | p-<br>value | Coeffi<br>cient          | T<br>val<br>ue | p-<br>val<br>ue | Hypothesis                     | Coeffi<br>cient | S<br>E | T-<br>Val<br>ue | P<br>value<br>s | Percentile<br>Bootstrap<br>95%<br>Confidenc<br>e Interval |           | Result                                        |
|                         |                |             |                          |                |                 |                                |                 |        |                 |                 | Lo<br>wer                                                 | Up<br>per |                                               |
| 0.33                    | 3.34           | 0.000***    | 0.242                    | 4.568          | 0.003*          | H3:<br>LS→PU→<br>DHRM          | 0.255           | 0.36   | 1.971           | 0.000***        | 0.302                                                     | 0.454     | Complemen<br>tary<br>Partial<br>Mediatio<br>n |
|                         |                |             |                          |                |                 | H6:<br>OS→BI→<br>DHRM          | 0.352           | 0.42   | 2.631           | 0.03*           | 0.150                                                     | 0.441     | Complemen<br>tary<br>Partial<br>Mediatio<br>n |

**Note(s):** LS: Leadership support, DHRM: Digital Human Resource Management, PU: Perceived usefulness BI: Behavioural intention SE: Standard Error, \*\*\*p < 0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

The findings validate a positive correlation between Leadership Support, Perceived usefulness, Behavioural Intention and DHRM implying that when organisations actively endorse technological initiatives, employees are more inclined to cultivate favourable attitudes towards adopting these technologies.

In addition, the mediating analysis provides evidence for Hypotheses 3 and 6 by demonstrating the intermediate functions of Perceived usefulness and Behavioural intention in the relationship between Leadership Support and Digital Human Resource Management. The findings highlight the significance of employees' perceptions and behavioural intention in moderating the impact of Leadership support on the adoption and effectiveness of digital HRM practices. Additionally, it suggests that employees' favourable Perceived usefulness and their intention to use it plays a vital role in translating Leadership support into successful adoption of DHRM practices.

### Implication

The findings suggest that leadership support is a significant predictor of perceived usefulness and behavioural intention, mediating the relationship between leadership actions and technology adoption. This expands the understanding of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by integrating leadership as a key factor, thereby providing a more comprehensive framework for examining technology adoption in organizational settings. Moreover, this study enriches the literature by demonstrating that leadership support not only enhances perceived usefulness but also directly influences employees' willingness to engage with DHRM systems.

Organizations should invest in leadership development programs that emphasize the role of leaders in digital transformation. Training leaders to effectively communicate the benefits of DHRM, provide ongoing support, and address employee concerns can significantly enhance the adoption rates of these systems. Additionally, organizations might consider integrating leadership support metrics into their performance evaluations to ensure that leaders are actively contributing to the digital transformation process.

### Limitation and Future Scope

This study employed a strong longitudinal design to investigate the relationships between different variables over a period of time. The failure to consider gender and cultural differences in this study prompts the question of whether the influence of Leadership support on technology adoption and attitudes varies among different cultural contexts and genders, potentially providing valuable insights. An in-depth examination of the elements that make up Perceived usefulness could provide valuable insights on the topic.

### Conclusion

This study highlights the pivotal role of leadership support in shaping employees' attitudes and behavioural intentions toward Digital Human Resource Management systems. Unlike general organizational support, leadership support provides direct and personalized guidance that significantly impacts employees' perceived usefulness of technology and their commitment to adopting and using it effectively.

The findings suggest that leadership support is not only a critical mediator in the relationship between leadership actions and technology adoption but also a key driver of successful digital transformation. By fostering a supportive and trust-based environment, leaders can significantly enhance employees' willingness to engage with new technologies, leading to more effective and sustained use of DHRM systems.

In conclusion, organizations aiming to succeed in their digital HRM initiatives should prioritize leadership support as a strategic component of their digital transformation efforts. By doing so, they can ensure that their workforce is not only equipped with the necessary tools and resources but also motivated and empowered to leverage these technologies to their fullest potential.

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