

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS AND STAKEHOLDER READINESS

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Abstract

Digital transformation in school management has become a strategic issue that influences the effectiveness of educational organizational management in the digital era. This study aims to analyze the role of digital transformation in driving organizational change in schools, encompassing structural, cultural, and functional dimensions, as well as to examine the role of school leadership and stakeholder readiness in determining the success of such transformation. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews with key informants, observations, and documentation studies related to the implementation of digital-based school management practices. Data analysis is conducted using thematic analysis through systematic processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that digital transformation promotes comprehensive organizational change, characterized by more flexible structures and workflows, the development of an adaptive and collaborative work culture, and the expansion of school management functions through the integration of digital technology. Furthermore, school leadership plays a strategic role as a change agent in directing and coordinating the digital transformation process, while stakeholder readiness particularly in cultural and psychological aspects serves as a determining factor in the effectiveness of digital management implementation. This study confirms that digital transformation represents a holistic and sustainable organizational change process in enhancing the effectiveness of school management.

Keywords: digital transformation, school management, organizational change, stakeholder readiness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in school management has increasingly emerged as a significant social phenomenon, driven by changes in the educational environment marked by advancements in information technology, digital-based education policies, and societal expectations for fast, transparent, and accountable educational services (Fullan & Quinn, 2021; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2020). In practice, many schools have adopted digital management systems to support academic administration, school data management, learning evaluation, and communication with parents, which directly reshapes work patterns, organizational structures, and decision-making mechanisms at the school level (Berman & Marshall, 2022; OECD, 2023). This shift indicates that digital transformation is not merely a technical endeavor but constitutes an organizational change process requiring adjustments in work culture, leadership roles, and interaction patterns among school community

members (Avolio et al., 2020; Fullan & Quinn, 2021). Empirical evidence also reveals variations in stakeholder readiness including principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents in responding to digital transformation, in terms of digital literacy, attitudes toward change, and adaptation to new work systems (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2020). The unpreparedness of some stakeholders often leads to resistance, reliance on traditional practices, and uneven utilization of technology, which impacts the effectiveness of organizational change in schools (Fullan & Quinn, 2021). At the same time, external pressures from governments, the labor market, and society increasingly compel schools to undergo digital transformation to remain relevant and competitive (OECD, 2023). These conditions underscore that digital transformation in school management is a complex and multidimensional social reality, in which its success critically depends on stakeholders' readiness to accept, understand, and actively participate in the ongoing organizational change process (Berman & Marshall, 2022; Avolio et al., 2020).

Previous studies indicate that digital transformation in school management has become a central issue in educational management and organizational studies, driven by increasing demands for efficiency, accountability, and transparency in school governance. Various studies emphasize that implementing digital systems in school management not only enhances administrative efficiency but also promotes structural and cultural organizational change. Research on digital leadership highlights the strategic role of school principals as change agents, particularly in shaping a transformative vision, managing change dynamics, and fostering an organizational climate that supports technology-based innovation. Other studies reveal that the readiness of teachers and administrative staff is a critical factor in the success of digital transformation, with digital literacy, attitudes toward change, and managerial support significantly influencing the adoption of digital systems in school management practices. Additionally, research using organizational change theory underscores that digital transformation is a long-term process involving planning, implementation, adaptation, and system reinforcement, requiring consistent policies and sustained organizational commitment. Several studies also highlight the importance of external stakeholder readiness, such as parents and the broader community, in supporting digital transformation in schools, particularly regarding communication, information transparency, and trust in digital management systems. From an organizational culture perspective, previous research finds that schools with collaborative cultures, openness to organizational learning, and responsiveness to environmental changes tend to succeed more in integrating digital technologies into their management systems. However, most prior studies have focused on technology or leadership aspects in isolation, without fully connecting them to stakeholder readiness as an integral part of the organizational change process. This gap indicates a significant need for an integrative approach that views digital transformation in school management as an organizational change process involving

structural, cultural, and social readiness among all stakeholders. Therefore, this study is relevant for enriching educational management scholarship by offering a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between digital transformation, organizational change, and stakeholder readiness within the school context.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach, positioning digital transformation in school management not merely as a process of technology adoption or administrative innovation, but as a complex and continuous organizational change process with stakeholder readiness as a central element (Berman & Marshall, 2022; Fullan & Quinn, 2021). Unlike previous studies that often examine technology, leadership, or organizational culture in isolation, this research offers a holistic perspective by directly linking digital transformation to organizational change dynamics and the readiness of all school stakeholders, both internal and external (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2020; Avolio et al., 2020). Another innovative aspect is the conceptualization of stakeholder readiness as a multidimensional construct encompassing structural, cultural, and psychological dimensions, allowing for a deeper analysis of factors influencing the success of digital transformation in schools (OECD, 2023). Furthermore, this study frames schools as learning organizations under continuous external environmental pressures, positioning digital transformation as a strategic response to demands for effectiveness, accountability, and transparency in educational management (Fullan & Quinn, 2021). By integrating organizational change theory with educational management frameworks, the study contributes to the development of a new conceptual model explaining causal relationships between digital transformation, organizational change, and stakeholder readiness in the school context (Berman & Marshall, 2022). Methodologically, novelty is also demonstrated through analysis of inter-variable relationships that go beyond descriptive insights to explain mechanisms by which organizational change is mediated or moderated by stakeholder readiness in digital management implementation (Avolio et al., 2020). Additionally, the research provides empirical contributions by examining digital transformation at the organizational level of schools comprehensively, rather than focusing on individual units, thereby generating a more thorough understanding of organizational change dynamics within educational settings. In sum, the originality of this study is rooted in conceptual integration, reinforcement of organizational perspectives, and emphasis on stakeholder readiness as a critical factor that has received limited attention in previous studies on digital transformation in school management.

The primary aim of this study is to comprehensively analyze how digital transformation in school management functions as an organizational change process that both influences and is determined by the level of stakeholder readiness in supporting adaptive and sustainable school governance (Fullan & Quinn, 2021; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2020). This objective is grounded in the argument that schools, as educational organizations, cannot view digital transformation merely as

an effort to modernize administrative systems or utilize information technology, but rather as an organizational change process that affects the structure, culture, and work practices of the entire school community (Berman & Marshall, 2022; Avolio et al., 2020). Within the school management context, digital transformation requires adjustments in leadership roles, decision-making mechanisms, and communication and coordination systems that are more open and data-driven, making its success heavily dependent on stakeholders' readiness to accept and internalize these changes (OECD, 2023). Stakeholder readiness including principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents is a strategic factor because they not only act as users of digital systems but also serve as key agents determining the effectiveness of organizational change (Fullan & Quinn, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to generate an in-depth understanding of the relationship between digital transformation and organizational change in schools, positioning stakeholder readiness as the foundation for successful digital management implementation. This argument is further reinforced by evidence that many digital initiatives in schools face barriers not due to technological limitations but because of low human resource readiness, resistance to change, and weak organizational cultures that fail to support innovation (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2020; Berman & Marshall, 2022). By examining these objectives, the study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to educational management scholarship, particularly by integrating perspectives on digital transformation and organizational change theory, while also offering practical implications for policymakers and school administrators in designing digital transformation strategies that emphasize stakeholder readiness and active participation.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted at a Madrasah Aliyah (MA) as the study site, considering that the institution is a secondary educational unit that is currently implementing or has begun implementing a digital management system in administrative and educational services (Berman & Marshall, 2022; Fullan & Quinn, 2021). This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, beginning with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of digital transformation as an organizational change process and stakeholder readiness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2019). The research subjects included the school principal, vice principal, teachers, and administrative staff as internal stakeholders, as well as representatives of students' parents as external stakeholders, selected using stratified purposive sampling to reflect the organizational structure and strategic roles within school management (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Quantitative data were collected through closed-ended questionnaires using a Likert scale, developed based on indicators of digital transformation in school management, dimensions of organizational change, and stakeholder readiness, which included structural, cultural, and psychological aspects. The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability to ensure accurate and consistent measurements (Hair et al., 2021). Quantitative data analysis was performed using inferential statistical techniques, such as path analysis or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), to examine the relationships among variables and understand the role of stakeholder readiness in the digital-based organizational change process (Byrne, 2016). Subsequently, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants and document studies of policies, programs, and digital management practices implemented in the school. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of organizational change, forms of stakeholder readiness, as well as challenges and strategies emerging in the digital transformation process (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This methodological approach was chosen because it allows for an empirical and contextual representation of the dynamics of digital transformation in school management as an organizational change process involving the readiness of all stakeholders (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2019).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Digital transformation in school management drives structural, cultural, and functional organizational changes.

Digital transformation in school management has proven to be a major catalyst for organizational change that is not merely technical in nature but also affects structural, cultural, and functional dimensions. Structurally, the implementation of digital systems has transformed school organizational workflows that were previously manual and hierarchical into more integrated and system-based processes. Task distribution has become clearer through the support of school management applications, while decision-making processes have become faster and more data-driven. From a cultural perspective, digital transformation has encouraged a shift in the work culture of school members toward greater adaptability, collaboration, and openness to innovation. Teachers and administrative staff have gradually become accustomed to work patterns that require digital literacy, continuous learning, and readiness to adapt to ongoing change. Functionally, the roles and functions of school management have expanded, as technology is no longer perceived merely as an administrative support tool but as an integral component of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating school programs. These findings are further reinforced by in-depth interviews with key informants directly involved in school management. One informant stated that the changes experienced were not only evident in work

systems but also in ways of thinking and patterns of interaction among school members. As expressed in the interview,

“Since the digital-based management system was implemented, we have not only been able to work more efficiently, but we have also become accustomed to engaging in discussions based on the available data and reports. Our work patterns have changed, the work culture has become more open, and each unit now has clearer roles and functions.”

This statement indicates that digital transformation directly contributes to changes in organizational structure, the formation of a new work culture, and the strengthening of school management functions as a whole. Interview findings from the informants generally confirm that the digitalization of school management cannot be separated from the organizational change process, as technology acts as a catalyst that influences how schools are organized, operated, and developed in a sustainable manner.

Table 1. Summary of Findings on Digital Transformation and Organizational Change in Schools

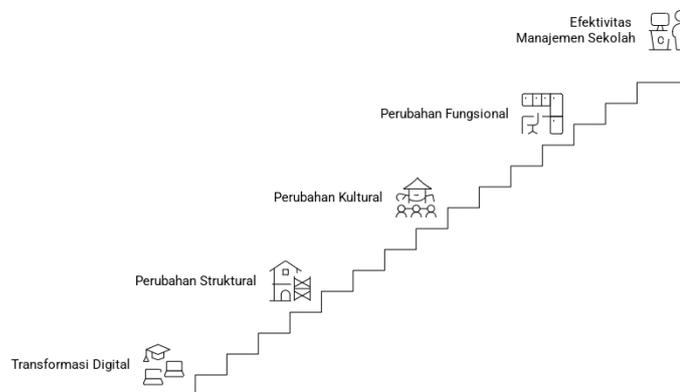
Aspect of Change	Forms of Change Identified	Empirical Indicators (Field Findings)	Impact on School Management
Structural	Changes in workflow and organizational coordination systems	Administrative and reporting processes are conducted through digital systems; task distribution is clearer and well-documented; decision-making is data-driven	Organizational structure becomes more flexible, responsive, and efficient; work hierarchy becomes more adaptive
Cultural	Shift in the work culture of school members	Increased openness to innovation; the development of collaborative work practices; improved digital literacy among teachers and administrative staff	An adaptive organizational culture is formed, open to change and supportive of continuous learning
Functional	Expansion of school management functions	Technology is utilized in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating school programs; digital systems become a core component of management	School management functions operate more effectively, in an integrated manner, and are oriented toward improving the quality of educational services

Source: Secondary Data (2025)

The table explains that digital transformation in school management results in organizational changes that occur simultaneously at the structural, cultural, and functional levels. From a structural perspective, digitalization drives changes in

workflows, task distribution, and coordination mechanisms, making them more integrated and system-based. Culturally, the implementation of technology triggers a shift in the work culture of school members toward more adaptive, collaborative, and innovation-oriented attitudes. Meanwhile, functionally, digital technology expands the role of school management, not merely as an administrative tool but as a strategic component in the sustainable planning, implementation, and evaluation of school programs.

Figure 1. Achieving Effective School Management Through Digital Transformation



Source: processed from interviews (2025)

The figure illustrates the conceptual flow of the research findings, showing that digital transformation serves as the primary driving factor of organizational change in schools, which subsequently leads to improved effectiveness of school management. Digital transformation is positioned as the starting point because the implementation of information technology in management encourages comprehensive changes in the way the organization operates. These changes emerge across three main, interrelated, and inseparable dimensions: structural, cultural, and functional. Structural change is reflected in coordination systems and decision-making processes that are increasingly data-driven; cultural change is evident in the development of a more adaptive and collaborative work culture; and functional change is reflected in the integration of technology across all school management functions. Altogether, this process culminates in enhanced school management effectiveness, both in terms of work efficiency, quality of management, and the overall quality of educational services.

Digital transformation in school management that drives structural, cultural, and functional organizational change demonstrates that digitalization operates as a strategic force that fundamentally reshapes how school organizations function. The structural changes identified can be interpreted as the result of shifts in coordination mechanisms and decision-making processes that are increasingly system- and data-driven, enabling school organizations to become more flexible and responsive.

Recent organizational studies emphasize that digital technologies significantly influence organizational design by flattening hierarchies and supporting agile structures, reaffirming contemporary interpretations of structural contingency theory in the digital era (Hanelt et al., 2021; Vial, 2019). From a cultural perspective, the findings indicate a transformation of shared values and work norms toward more adaptive, collaborative, and innovation-oriented practices. Recent developments in organizational culture theory suggest that sustained digital practices function as powerful cultural artifacts that gradually reshape collective assumptions and behaviors within organizations, including educational institutions (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2023; Karimi & Walter, 2021). Functionally, the integration of digital technologies across core management activities planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation shows that technology has evolved from a supporting instrument into a strategic managerial resource. This aligns with recent organizational change literature, which views digital transformation as a continuous change process requiring organizations to abandon legacy routines and institutionalize new ways of working (Burnes, 2020; Kane et al., 2021). Furthermore, contemporary socio-technical systems perspectives highlight that successful digital transformation depends on the alignment between social elements (people, culture, leadership, and structure) and technical systems, rather than on technology adoption alone (Pasmore et al., 2023; Sebastian et al., 2020). Taken together, these findings confirm that digital transformation in school management should be understood as a holistic and dynamic organizational change process in which technological, structural, cultural, and functional dimensions interact integratively and cannot be treated in isolation.

School leadership plays a strategic role as the main driver of successful digital transformation and organizational change.

School leadership has a highly strategic role in determining the success of digital transformation and the overall process of organizational change. These findings indicate that digital transformation cannot be implemented effectively without visionary and adaptive leadership that is capable of guiding all school members toward clear change objectives. School leaders function as change agents who bridge policies, technology, and operational work practices, thereby creating alignment between the vision of digital transformation and the readiness of human resources. In the context of organizational change, leadership plays a crucial role in managing resistance to change, building collective commitment, and creating an organizational climate that supports innovation and continuous learning. School leaders who proactively encourage the use of digital technologies not only provide the necessary infrastructure and supportive policies but also serve as role models in utilizing digital systems, thereby fostering trust and motivation among school members to adapt. These findings are further reinforced by in-depth interviews with key informants, which reveal that the successful implementation of digital

transformation is highly dependent on the direction and support provided by school leadership. One informant stated,

“When school leaders are directly involved and set an example in using digital systems, teachers and staff become more confident in embracing the change. Clear direction and consistent support make the organizational change process run more smoothly.”

This interview excerpt reflects that leadership functions not only as a decision-making authority but also as a facilitator and motivator in the digital transformation process. Overall, the interview findings from the informants confirm that strong and responsive school leadership is a key factor in integrating digital technology into school management systems and in ensuring that organizational change can be sustained and accepted by all members of the school community.

School leadership plays a strategic role as the main driving force behind the success of digital transformation and organizational change, indicating that school leaders have a central function in directing, coordinating, and internalizing change processes into everyday organizational practices. Effective leadership is not limited to making technical decisions related to the use of technology, but also involves building a shared vision, aligning digital transformation goals with organizational values, and creating a psychological climate that supports the acceptance of change. This finding is consistent with transformational leadership theory proposed by Bass and Avolio, which emphasizes that transformational leaders inspire organizational members to move beyond individual interests and commit to shared change goals through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration principles that remain highly relevant in contemporary organizational contexts (Avolio & Bass, 2020; Banks et al., 2022).

An the context of digital transformation, school leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership characteristics tend to be more successful in reducing resistance and enhancing stakeholders' readiness for organizational change (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2021; Kane et al., 2021). Moreover, these findings can also be explained through the concept of digital leadership, which highlights the role of leaders in leveraging digital technologies as strategic tools to foster innovation, collaboration, and organizational effectiveness in the digital era (Zeike et al., 2019; Petry, 2020; El Sawy et al., 2020). From the perspective of organizational change theory, Kotter's change model underscores the necessity of strong leadership to create a sense of urgency, build guiding coalitions, and sustain change initiatives over time elements that are particularly critical in digital transformation processes (Kotter, 2021; Appelbaum et al., 2022).

Therefore, school leadership can be interpreted as a key connecting factor between digital transformation and organizational change, where the success of digitalization largely depends on leaders' ability to manage both the technical and social dimensions of change. These findings reinforce the argument that digital

transformation in schools is not merely a technological issue, but fundamentally a process of strategic leadership that harmoniously integrates vision, people, and organizational systems (Fullan & Quinn, 2021; OECD, 2023).

Stakeholder readiness, particularly in cultural and psychological aspects, determines the effectiveness of digital transformation in school management.

Stakeholder readiness, especially in terms of cultural and psychological dimensions, is a determining factor in the effectiveness of digital transformation in school management, because technology-based change fundamentally requires shifts in mindsets, attitudes, and work values among all members of the school community. These findings indicate that the success of digital management transformation does not rely solely on the availability of technological infrastructure and systems, but is strongly influenced by the extent to which stakeholders are able to accept and internalize change as part of the organizational culture. Culturally, digital transformation requires a work culture that is open to innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, while psychologically it demands individuals' readiness to step out of their comfort zones, overcome anxiety toward technology, and build confidence in using digital systems. When stakeholders' cultural and psychological readiness is low, digital transformation processes tend to progress slowly, generate resistance, and fail to become optimally integrated into school management practices.

These findings are reinforced by interview data from informants directly involved in school management processes. One informant stated:

“Although the digital system is already available, not all school members are immediately ready to use it. Some are afraid of making mistakes, while others are still comfortable with traditional ways of working, so time and continuous support are needed for the change to be accepted.”

This excerpt illustrates that psychological factors and work culture constitute the main challenges in implementing digital transformation. Overall, the interview results confirm that stakeholder readiness is not merely a matter of technical competence, but is also closely related to attitudes, values, and perceptions of change. Stakeholders with strong cultural and psychological readiness tend to be more adaptive, participatory, and supportive of successful digital transformation in school management, whereas insufficient readiness in these aspects can become a significant barrier to the organizational change process.

Stakeholder readiness, particularly in cultural and psychological aspects, determines the effectiveness of digital transformation in school management, indicating that technology-based change is essentially a form of social and behavioral change rather than merely a technical system upgrade. Cultural readiness can be understood as the alignment of values, norms, and work habits of school members with the demands of digital-based practices, while psychological readiness relates to individuals' attitudes, motivation, self-efficacy, and acceptance

of change. This finding is consistent with organizational culture theory, which emphasizes that the success of organizational change is strongly influenced by the compatibility between introduced innovations and the underlying values and assumptions held by organizational members; when organizational culture does not support innovation and continuous learning, technology adoption tends to be symbolic and unsustainable (Schein & Schein, 2021; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2023).

Furthermore, this finding aligns with the contemporary concept of readiness for change, which highlights that individual readiness encompasses beliefs about the necessity of change, confidence in personal capability, and perceptions of organizational support factors that are critical in shaping responses to digital transformation initiatives (Holt et al., 2020; Vakola, 2021). In the context of digital transformation in school management, stakeholders' psychological readiness becomes a crucial prerequisite for ensuring that technology is utilized effectively and does not generate resistance or disengagement. In addition, socio-technical systems theory reinforces this interpretation by asserting that the success of technological systems depends on the alignment between technical systems and social systems within organizations, including people, culture, and structures (Pasmore et al., 2019; Pasmore et al., 2023). Therefore, these findings indicate that the effectiveness of digital transformation in school management can only be achieved when stakeholders' cultural and psychological readiness is strategically managed through the strengthening of organizational culture, effective change communication, and sustained support for school members in navigating the dynamics of organizational

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of the study, it can be concluded that digital transformation in school management is a strategic process that drives comprehensive and sustainable organizational change. Digital transformation does not merely have implications for the technical use of technology; it also triggers structural, cultural, and functional changes within school organizations. Structural changes are reflected in shifts in workflow, coordination systems, and decision-making mechanisms that are increasingly data-driven and integrated. Meanwhile, cultural changes are evident in the development of a more adaptive, collaborative, and innovation-oriented work culture, while functional changes are manifested through the integration of digital technology into all school management functions, from planning to program evaluation.

This study also confirms that school leadership plays a highly strategic role as the main driving force behind the success of digital transformation and organizational change. School leaders act as agents of change who not only make technical decisions regarding the use of technology but also build a shared vision, manage resistance, and create an organizational climate conducive to innovation and

continuous learning. Visionary and adaptive leadership that sets an example in the effective use of technology has proven to enhance the readiness and commitment of school stakeholders in responding to digitally driven organizational change. In addition to leadership, stakeholder readiness particularly in cultural and psychological aspects emerges as a critical determinant of the effectiveness of digital transformation in school management. The findings indicate that the success of digitalization is strongly influenced by the readiness of school members to accept change, adjust work-related values and norms, and develop self-confidence in using digital systems. A lack of cultural and psychological readiness may lead to resistance and hinder the optimal integration of technology into school management practices.

Overall, this study emphasizes that digital transformation in school management should be understood as a holistic organizational change process, in which technology, leadership, organizational structure, culture, managerial functions, and stakeholder readiness interact dynamically and cannot be separated from one another. Therefore, digital transformation efforts in schools need to be managed strategically by strengthening leadership capacity, fostering an adaptive organizational culture, and enhancing the cultural and psychological readiness of school stakeholders to ensure sustainable improvements in management effectiveness and the quality of educational services.

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