

# Research on the collaborative mechanism between digital governance and charismatic leadership from the perspective of public service motivation

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**Abstract.** With the advancement of modernization of national governance and governance capacity, technologies represented by big data and government public governance are changing government behavior and public service supply. Digital governance is one of the main driving forces for modernizing governance, and as an important driving force for modernizing governance, digital governance has generated new demands for government leadership while undergoing technological changes. Charismatic leadership is characterized by charm, vision motivation, and personalized care, and has unique effectiveness in uniting and supporting organizations in dealing with complex changes. The author takes public service motivation as the main theoretical intermediary to explore the mechanism of digital governance and charismatic leadership in public administration reform. Through sorting out the relevant concepts and main viewpoints of public service motivation theory, digital governance theory, and charismatic leadership theory, the author attempts to construct a theoretical model of digital governance and charismatic leadership in the context of public administration based on the shaping of a digital governance theoretical model based on charismatic leadership, combined with the theory of public service motivation. Therefore, the article provides specific path optimization plans from the aspects of enhancing leaders' digital leadership, comprehensive incubation service willingness, and the "leader technology willingness" trinity ecological environment, aiming to help promote the improvement of government leadership and performance in the digital transformation period, and also provide academic guidance and reference for related research.

**Keywords:** Public Service Motivation; Digital Governance; Charismatic Leadership; Collaborative Mechanism; Public Administration.

## 1. Introduction

The current era is the digital age, and technological changes represented by big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain are affecting the economic and social development process with unprecedented breadth and depth, and forcing traditional public management methods to undergo transformation [1]. The construction of digital government has become an important form of new public management transformation: it refers to the process of using digital technology for government process reengineering, cross domain collaboration, government civilian interaction, and service intelligence, in order to achieve precise, efficient, and inclusive governance goals. But the combination of technology and governance is not simply an additive relationship. Practice has proven that soulless "technology implantation" often leads to "old wine in new bottles" and even brings new digital divide, data security and other issues. Whether the empowering effect of technology can be realized depends on individuals themselves, especially leaders of change. Therefore, in the complex and uncertain digital wave, a leadership style characterized by vision, passion, personal style, special attention, and mobilization of deep loyalty - charismatic leadership - is particularly important. Charismatic leaders can not only unite people's hearts and dissolve resistance to reform, but also endow mechanically rigid digital systems with the soul of humanity and values, bridging the value of digital tools and public services. Therefore, studying the relationship between digital governance and charismatic leadership is of great significance for understanding and achieving good governance. This article aims to analyze how charismatic leadership interacts and empowers digital governance from the theoretical perspective of the intrinsic driving force of public service motivation, and to construct

an effective collaborative path framework between the two. The goal is to provide useful references for enriching the theory of public leadership and guiding governance practices in the digital age [2].

## **2. Theoretical connotation of charismatic leadership and its unique value in the public sector**

### **2.1 Digital Literacy: A New Dimension of Digital Communication and Expression for Charismatic Leaders**

The understanding and application of digital language is a fundamental quality requirement for charismatic leadership. In the era of digital governance, governance innovation is not just about updating technological means, but also about rebuilding a new governance discourse system and way of thinking. Charismatic leaders should go beyond the technical level to understand the essential characteristics of modern science and technology such as big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, and see their possibilities and limitations in empowering governance [3].

This does not mean that the leader must be a person who understands technology, but rather has a high level of technical literacy and judgment on specific situations, selecting the most suitable solution to solve public affairs problems among numerous complex technical solutions. More importantly, leaders should make full use of information technology tools such as charts and online platforms to transform policy discourse into image discourse; Using data to demonstrate governance achievements; Establish a direct communication mechanism using the internet as a medium [4].

If a leader can use digital language to clarify how intelligent technology will improve the speed of emergency response, and big data analysis can effectively discover which aspects are the shortcomings of community elderly care, then the leadership art he demonstrates will have a new era of carrier and persuasiveness. The higher the mastery of digital language, the more the blueprint depicted by the leader is not an empty phrase, but a perceptible, touchable, and practical process, greatly enhancing the followers' sense of value identification and confidence in action.

### **2.2 Change Management: Systematic Thinking and Resilient Leadership of Charismatic Leadership**

Dealing with the uncertainty of digitalization is a major test of the wisdom and willpower of charismatic leaders. The process of digitization is not a non-linear progressive upgrade optimization, but rather a highly uncertain and complex system evolution process. Among them, potential hazards that may arise from technological applications, transitional conflicts during digital transformation, obstacles that may arise during organizational adjustments, employees' discomfort in the face of digital transformation, and social issues arising from data ethics, algorithmic biases, etc., are intertwined into a high-order network of change [5].

Charismatic leaders need to demonstrate high emotional stability and crisis management skills in such complex and uncertain situations. While firmly advancing the pace of reform and development, they should also be able to timely identify potential risks and hazards, and believe that technology can enhance governance capabilities while not ignoring the occurrence of its negative effects [6].

When organizational employees experience anxiety and behavioral resistance due to the impact of change, charismatic leaders need to effectively resolve group doubts through open and smooth communication channels, allowing trial and error organizational mechanisms to reduce the psychological cost of transformation, and encouraging a learning culture to improve the overall adaptability of the team. This is a high-level ability to manage complexity, allowing charismatic leaders to grasp the direction in the wave of digital transformation, lead organizational members smoothly through the transformation period, and complete a new reconstruction in a stable way.

### **2.3 Value Integration: Humanistic Interpretation and Ethical Protection Mission of Charismatic Leadership**

The integration of technology and humanity is the fundamental value goal of charismatic leadership in the digital age. Digital governance is prone to falling into the trap of technological determinism, which blindly emphasizes instrumental rationality and weakens value rationality, deviating from the fundamental purpose of serving the people. The important function of charismatic leadership is to establish an organic connection between technological tools and governance values, insisting on whether it is beneficial to human development and social public welfare as the ultimate value standard of technological innovation.

They need to fully utilize their personality charm, use humanistic language to describe dry technical indicators, and use concrete scenarios to describe abstract system platforms. For example, in introducing the implementation process of smart city construction projects, in addition to clarifying the operation mode of IoT perception layer devices and big data centers, it is also necessary to vividly express how these platforms provide safety guarantees for elderly people living alone in the community, how we can make children's education smoother, and how we can help disabled people achieve better social participation [7].

It is in this process of shaping meaning and connecting values that charismatic leaders can continuously awaken the service consciousness of technical bureaucrats, consolidate the professional beliefs of civil servants, and promote the formation of a common value recognition of digital government construction among the public; And actively create a value culture atmosphere within its institutions that respects scientific and technological laws and adheres to public spirit, so that every technological breakthrough develops along the correct value direction of fairness, impartiality, and openness, and based on this, ultimately achieving the goal of improving digital governance efficiency and bringing warmth to human society.

## **3. The interactive logic between digital governance and charismatic leadership**

The ability of numerical governance and charismatic leadership are also interconnected. In the practice of public administration, the two form a dynamic relationship, and on this basis, they achieve mutual configuration and ultimately form a symbiotic state. The two also form a joint force through the motivation of public services, thereby promoting public organizations to achieve higher levels of organizational efficiency and value realization [8].

### **3.1 Empowering charismatic leaders with digital governance: providing new contexts and tools**

The new digital governance makes transparency, interconnectivity, and data density possible, providing a new platform for charismatic leaders to shine: charismatic leaders can visualize public service issues and the vision after digital reform through digital means, making the vision more "practical" and "charming". For example, when charismatic leaders use the urban operation network management platform to showcase their governance achievements, they can intuitively feel their own value through digital technology, and this will be the case in the future. The digital technology relied upon by charismatic leaders is often a means for them to demonstrate creativity and leadership. The use of big data, artificial intelligence, and other technologies can have an "additive" effect on the image of a reformer in leadership. Digital technology makes communication between leaders flatter, making it easier for leaders to communicate with leaders and even experts at multiple levels, and to convey warmth and listen to opinions, thereby deepening emotional connections and expanding their influence [9].

### **3.2 Charismatic leadership leads the deepening of digital governance: injecting soul and resolving resistance**

Charismatic leadership is the 'glue' that enables digital governance to be effective. Charismatic leadership can construct meaning and transform technological discourse into mission narratives, such as interpreting the construction of a big data platform as connecting the last mile of serving the people, thereby linking digital projects with the intrinsic service motivations of public officials. Charismatic leaders can use passion to guide emotions, empathy, and shared concerns, convey hope, and guide employees to overcome anxiety and resistance during the transformation process; Being able to create a bold and error tolerant organizational atmosphere, taking the lead in learning digital tools and investing resources in training employees, conveying signals of growth between the organization and its members, and inspiring emotional recognition and commitment.

## **4. Mechanism Optimization and Path Suggestions**

### **4.1 Enhance the digital governance capabilities of charismatic leaders**

Faced with the disruptive impact of digitization, the connotation of digital public leadership needs to be comprehensively reorganized. Public leaders are no longer solely based on reputation and process organization, and the charm of public leaders cannot be just an "explicit organizational ritual" that people follow and admire, but needs to become a subtle force for leading digital change, that is, the new digital leadership of public leaders. Digital leadership of public leaders is the integration of the charm, passion for change, and professional digital abilities necessary for the digital age. It requires leaders to have the ability to construct a digital vision, and it requires public leaders not to be passive recipients of technology or empty advocates of technology, but to be decoders and transformers between technology and organizational goals. Public leaders need to understand what these digital technologies or tools are and what the long-term mission of the organization is to serve the public and solve specific public problems[10]. They need to connect all digital tools and future development opportunities and potentials with a meaningful and dynamic digital story, so that the public can understand, know, and comprehend what benefits and values digital management can bring to them, and then reach a consensus on social behavior, making organizational members excited. It requires leaders to possess data thinking and data analysis abilities. As digital leaders, they need to have a unique quality of public leadership, which can be an advocate for data-driven decision-making models rather than intuition and experience. They can truly use data to explore the public value and practical significance of big data, form and strengthen a culture of respecting data among organizational members, and change the traditional concept of "respecting facts". Public leaders also need to possess technical ethics and risk management skills.

### **4.2 Strengthening the cultivation and maintenance of public service motivation**

The strength of public service motivation ultimately depends on the subjective initiative of individuals, and determines the efficiency and innovation speed of digital technology in the public sector. Therefore, the public sector should elevate the cultivation and improvement of public service motivation to the same strategic level as digital technology innovation, and implement systematic and continuous human resource planning and development for digital talents, especially to enhance their public service motivation. In the selection and recruitment process, it is necessary to establish a bottom line of values. Not only does it test professional and digital abilities, but it also requires the implementation of scientific evaluation techniques such as situational assessments, value scales, in-depth interviews, etc., to assess the public ideals and aspirations of the incumbent, empathy towards the service recipients, and the personality traits of willingness to contribute, and to filter the service public ideals of organizational members at the entrance. In terms of human resource development, it is necessary to shift the focus of training from imparting skills to emphasizing the significance of participating in digital technology application training programs. Each application of digital

technology should clearly express which practical public problems exist in reality, which public objects and groups are served, or help the government formulate public policies with better quality and more in line with actual needs. We should introduce as many real-life service recipients as possible, organize members' on-site service experiences, share typical cases of public services, and continuously activate and strengthen the deep motivation of training recipients to do what they want, connecting technical tools to the level of serving the people. In terms of assessment and motivation, it is necessary to innovate the value orientation.

Thirdly, establish more evaluation indicators that are crucial for public value creation, such as the substantial social value of digital innovation achievements (including benefits created for users), public user evaluations, and contributions to collaborative services between internal organizations; Performance feedback (results) should be closely linked to job promotion, honor recognition, and job development opportunities; The incentive methods should strive to achieve both meaningful and material incentives. In addition to salary incentives, more organizational incentives should be given in terms of respecting honor and other aspects to meet the high-level spiritual needs of public service personnel; To implement the organizational culture identity of employees, leaders should continuously emphasize and enhance the primary value creed of the organization's public service through daily expression, decision-making, rituals (commending good public services as organizational culture models, etc.), recognition of organizational trust and authorization, and tolerance of failed attempts in organizational culture. They should cultivate a public service motivation based on public purposes for innovation and exploration, trust, and authorization, allowing for a growth oriented organizational culture atmosphere that allows trial and error, and making public service motivation a deeply rooted value gene that is shared and difficult to shake by all members of the organization.

### **4.3 Building a public administrative ecosystem that integrates leadership, technology, and motivation**

The success of digital governance cannot be achieved by the transformation and improvement of a single element (leadership element, technology element, or motivation element), but by actively promoting the loose coupling of the three elements to the institutional arrangement of mutual embedding and progress at the macro level of the public administration system. Firstly, emphasis should be placed on collaborative symbiosis in the design of top-level systems. When the higher-level government plans and deploys important digital governance projects, it should also synchronously deploy or plan in advance the institutional design and organizational culture cultivation for the development of digital governance leadership, and provide funding budget, personnel allocation, and supporting policy support. Thoroughly change the simple cognition and practice of exchanging hard for soft, focusing on technology but not on people, and emphasizing investment over learning. Incorporate leadership development and motivation stimulation into the unified planning from the beginning of the project. Secondly, the inherent design of technology itself should emphasize a humanistic orientation. The design and procurement of digital governance technology solutions should always place frontline civil servants and the general public at the core of technology users. The goal of designing a system is to reduce workload, empower individuals, and enhance synergy, making technology an empowering tool that liberates hands, enhances the sense of achievement and professional competence of public officials, rather than digital redundancy that becomes a shackle and enslavement that squeezes and restricts the hands, feet, and work enthusiasm of public officials. A good user interface and convenient operation are enough to enhance the initiative and competence of public officials, which in turn provides a good growth environment for motivation stimulation. Thirdly, it is necessary to further establish a feedback loop system for learning. By regularly evaluating the impact of digital governance projects on the public service motivation level, job satisfaction, team collaboration, and public service work efficiency of public officials.

Timely adjust and optimize technical solutions, leadership behavior, and relevant management policies based on the feedback from people, so that the entire system has the ability to evolve and

dynamically adjust. Fourth, widely open up the participation of diverse subjects. Through open digital platforms such as political consultation, online inquiry, and collaborative governance, we encourage the public, social organizations, enterprises, and others to participate more widely in expressing their opinions, designing decisions, and supervising accountability in public affairs. By openly communicating and interacting in this way, while achieving democratization and scientification of governance, it is more important to gain feedback and recognition from the hands of the service recipients, and to obtain the most direct and intuitive public service experience for the service recipients, thereby strengthening and verifying the most profound and effective motivation for public service. Only by constructing an ecological system that integrates leadership to guide direction, technology to empower, and motivation to drive execution, can digital governance truly achieve stable and far-reaching results, and realize the modern governance effect of enhancing efficiency with technology and infusing soul with humanities.

## 5. Conclusion

The above research starts from the theory of public service motivation and systematically reveals the operational logic of collaborative operation in public administration, with digital governance and charismatic leadership as the examination objects. Research has found that there is a highly mutually effective structural relationship between digital governance and charismatic leadership. On the one hand, digital governance provides charismatic leadership with effective means and platforms for organizational change and influencing action, opening up new leadership scenarios; On the other hand, charismatic leadership embeds "soul" and "direction" in digital governance, effectively motivating and stabilizing the public service motivation of public officials through meaning interpretation, emotional appeal, and exemplary examples, thereby breaking through the constraints of transformation and ensuring that technology application serves the original purpose of public value. The motivation for public service is the "glue" that interacts between two structures, effectively transforming the external forces of leadership and technical expertise into lasting internal motivations for public officials, becoming the "key point" of the structural relationship.

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