



BENEFITS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES TO ITS EMPLOYEES AND CLIENTELE

THE CASE OF THE DIGITALIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS (FORMERLY THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION) IN THE ISSUANCE OF OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATE

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Abstract : This study is an evaluation of the digitalization service/process of the Department of Migrant Workers in the issuance of Overseas Employment Certificates (OECs). Respondents are the employees and the clients, the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), who transact at the Regional Office XI. This study will employ Likert Scale, and Time and Motion Study to determine the benefits and effectiveness of the digitalized process of OECs to employees and clientele. The study contributes to the enhancement of the service to be user-friendly to have an efficient and effective digitalization service to OFWs.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Technology is indeed unstoppable. Manual and mechanical eras are now digitalized. Digitalization is adopting digital technologies in the organization (Parviainen, Tihinen, Kääriäinen, & Teppola, 2017) to facilitate the efficient delivery of services. Through this advanced system, private companies, businesses, and even government offices benefited especially during the recent situation caused by COVID-19 by adapting and overcoming it using the digital platform (Almeida, Santos, & Monteiro, 2020). From here, inevitably, organizations are moving along the path of digital transformation.

We view the digitalization of public governance as transforming the “analog” version of governance into “digital” governance. Digital era governance (DEG) grew fast in the 2000s (Dunleavy & Margetts, 2010) in a globalized world that brings many benefits. It can save lives, help meet climate change, challenge, and create jobs. Numerous empirical studies have been conducted on e-government diffusion among government organizations and citizens' willingness to adopt e-government services (Lindgren, Madsen, Hofmann, & Melin, 2019). Germany and the United States have local e-government. On the other hand, China's digital economy has rapidly expanded. China's government plays a vital role in maximizing the benefits of digitalization while lessening related risks, including potential labor disruption, privacy infringement, emergencies, monopoly, and financial risks (Zhang & Chen, 2019).

On August 30, 2022, Senator Win Gatchalian filed Senate Bill no. 1793, or the “Full Digitalization Act of 2022”. This bill aims to streamline procedures by adopting automation and digitizing government services, conceptualizing and critical reflection on the underlying interaction between citizens and public officials that digital public services are developed to support. This change will facilitate the efficient delivery of government services under the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 (Republic Act No. 11032), and other applicable laws.

In connection with this, most Philippine government offices are now adopting the digitalization of services to facilitate growing clientele. They have created an online platform so that clients don't need to physically appear in their respective offices. Hence, they have created an online account to check members' contributions, online payment of premiums, and online application

for loans by the Social Security System, Home Development Mutual Fund, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, and Philippine Statistics Authority, among others.

The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) is now doing the same trend in facilitating its clientele through digitalized system. Filipino International Migrant Workers, known as Overseas Filipino Workers, are considered modern-day heroes in the Philippines. OFWs are contracted workers who avails vacations with paid airfares to their home country annually. Before returning to their workplace, an OFW must get an Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) to prove that they are a documented overseas contract worker. The OEC is presented to the Airlines Check-in counter to avail of the terminal fee exemption given to OFWs. At the immigration counters, a Bureau of Immigration (BI) officer validates not just the passport and work visa of an OFW but also the contract and OEC. If a Filipino departing does not have an OEC or a validated contract, a BI officer has the discretion to hold a Filipino from departing the country.

This study investigates the benefits and effectiveness of digitalization process in the issuance of Overseas Employment Certificate to the DMW employees and clientele, the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the effectiveness and benefits of digitalization in the issuance of Overseas Employment Certificate to employees and clientele, the OFWs. Thus, it aims to answer the following questions;

- 1 How effective is the digitalization process of Overseas Employment Certificate to the DMW employees and to the Overseas Filipino Workers?
- 2 What are the benefits of the digitalized process/service to the DMW employees and clientele?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to show the benefits and effectiveness of acquiring digitalized OEC to the OFWs and DMW employees.

Significance of the Study

This study leaves its significance to:

Department of Migrant Workers, to effectively and continuously improve the programs and processes that would greatly benefit their clients as well as their employees;

OFWs, to respectively believe and follow government policies and regulations that by design protect and promote their welfare;

Future researchers, to give additional information and further studies for other researchers who wants to conduct further research on the related field.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This investigation will be conducted to determine the benefits and effectiveness of the digitalization of DMW's issuance of OEC to its Employees and Clientele. The data collection will be conducted among 100 selected respondents who will represent the population. The researcher will consider the aspects of each respondent's answer to the given questionnaires with the following data;

- Age
- Gender
- Job Title
- Country
- Length of Service
- OEC issued

Citizen's Charter

Digitalized Process

- Step/ Process Name
- Person Assigned
- Duration (minutes)
- Satisfaction rating

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Context of Migration

People have always migrated in search of better economic opportunities. The most common and simple reasons why Filipinos choose to work abroad are because of higher salaries, to send their children to good schools, to have small properties or investments, and to work in greener pastures (Bautista & Tamayo, 2020). Among the countries, the Philippines have contributed significantly to the migration of workers globally. Observations reveal that international migration has become a trend in the country.

Today, more people migrate specifically from developing countries to developed countries. According to the [International Organization for Migration on their World Migration Report 2020](#), as of June 2019, the number of international migrants was estimated to be almost 272 million globally, 51 million more than in 2010. Nearly two-thirds were labor migrants (United Nations).

While there are those who migrate out of choice, many still work overseas out of necessity. This can be seen in the case of third-world countries where the economy cannot meet the expectations of its labor force. In the case of the Philippines, population growth plays a vital role that affects migration where there are very limited jobs for its population. The country's unemployment rate has gradually increased from 8.4 percent in 1990 to 12.7 percent in 2003 (BLES 2003). Even those employed have difficulties in their status of living where one out of every five employed are underemployed, underpaid, or employed below his/her full potential. In effect, the number of Filipinos working abroad has risen from 1995 to 2000 where deployed workers increased by 5.32 percent annually (Lorenzo, Galvez-Tan, Icamina, & Javier, 2007). Moreover, as per Fitch Solutions, OFW remittances accounted for an average of nearly 10 percent of GDP in the last decade which is a huge factor in the Philippine economy. Migration plays a vital role in managing the country's foreign exchange rate against volatilities. The Philippine Statistics Office anticipated the number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to be 1.83 million in 2021, up from the estimated 1.77 million in 2020. With the significant number of migrating workers comes great responsibility for the government. That is to ensure that OFWs are at an advantage and protected.

Documentation of Workers

Overseas Filipino Workers are to undergo documentation process at the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) as mandated by the Philippine government under the rules and regulations governing the recruitment and employment of landbased/seabased overseas filipino workers of 2016, in order to secure an exit permit called Oversea Employment Certificate (OEC) when departing for, or returning to their work overseas as a form of protection.

The DMW evaluates the documents of applicants for overseas employment to ensure that their employment contracts follow the standards and requirements of Filipino workers overseas. After evaluation, an Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) is issued to certify that they are legal/documented workers (DOLE). This is done to protect our migrant workers from exploitation.

e-government/Digitalization of Government Services

Numerous empirical studies have been conducted on e-government diffusion among government organizations and citizens' willingness to adopt e-government services (Lindgren et al., 2019). Germany and the United States have local e-government. The presence of local e-government in Germany is more advanced compared to the United States (Wohlers, 2009). On the other hand, China's digital economy has rapidly expanded. China's government plays a vital role in maximizing the benefits of digitalization while lessening related risks, including potential labor disruption, privacy infringement, emergencies, monopoly, and financial risks (Zhang & Chen, 2019).

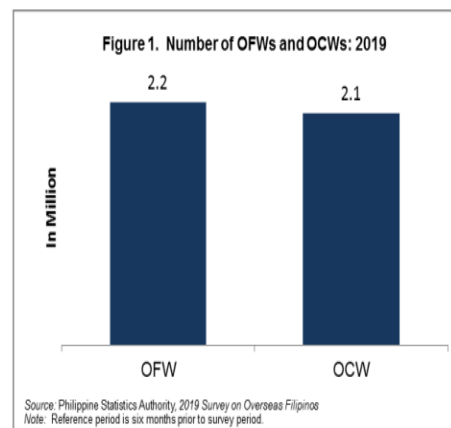
Global economic competitiveness has changed over time in several ways. Many nations have entered the global race to become more productive and competitive. Productivity rises if they can produce more or better-quality output from the same amount of input (Krajewski and Ritzman, 1998). Productivity also rises if they can keep up output while using fewer resources. The productivity of an organization is influenced by a variety of things, like digital transformation, which refers to the deployment of digital technology to transform services and processes. This is also pervasive in migration management and includes everything from online application forms to automated decision support and return procedures. Governments research new technology to handle migration more effectively, migrants search online for information, and specialists examine new data sources to comprehend migration patterns and the future of migration. New opportunities are presented by digitization. Technology adoption and utilization benefit migrants at every stage of their trip. Prior to moving, technology can provide access to a wider range of information about potential locations, employment prospects, tips on planning and carrying out a migration journey, and can enable digital interactions with potential employers and other migrants (Dekker and Faber, 2016).

With that being in trend, the Philippine government also ensures that their respective agencies are globally competitive and productive in their processes, ensuring the benefits it can provide for the Filipinos. Thus, the recruitment of migrant workers has been significantly impacted by the quickly shifting reality around the Coronavirus Disease (COVID19) pandemic, which has also sped up the adoption and innovation of digital technology across practically all facets of society. Policymakers and practitioners working on migrant worker recruitment challenges should comprehend how new technologies are employed in recruiting while comprehending the hazards and limiting factors resulting from technology-based solutions as this environment continues to change. (Gallo et al, 2021).

e-government indeed shows positive feedback to clients as long as there are user-friendly systems. Using public value theory, study shows that a e-government brought client satisfaction and service quality for clients, and improved trust and communications for citizens (MacLean & Titah, 2022). Moreover, e-government establishment reduces the time of doing things, increases the effectiveness, improves after sales services with lower cost, improves services information, introduces new services, increases the degree of confidence in investigating the requests and services, increases the speed of cash payments, facilitates services receive, establishes communications with users and improves the quality of services (Mahmoodi & Nojehdeh, 2016).

Overseas Filipino Workers are estimated at 2.2 million

The number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who worked abroad at any time during the period April to September 2019 was estimated at 2.2 million. Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) or those with existing work contract comprised 96.8 percent of the total OFWs during the said period. The rest who worked overseas without contract accounted for 3.2 percent (Figure 1 and Table A2).



Effectiveness of digitalization

With the technological advancement policy makers were challenged on how to maximize effectively and efficiently the use of ICT networks and applications (Sabbagh et al., 2012). Through digitalization, public can readily access the government services without incurring transportation cost and time in falling in line to avail or apply government services. The government direction should be on the digitalization of services rather than focusing on access and usage. In the time of pandemic, digitalization is the best tool used to deliver the government services like in the education where in online and asynchronous class were conducted so as not to hamper the progress of students and it benefits the stakeholders as it saves cost and time (Mustapha, Van, Shahverdi, Qureshi, & Khan, 2021).

Effectiveness of digitalization of government services can be best measured through the perceptions of the users (Pedrosa et al., 2020). Over the past few years, the concept of public value has become dominant in the developed countries like the United States, the European Union, and Australia, and in developing countries in examining the performance of public services from perspective of the users, the citizens. This study does not only focus on citizens but also to the concerned government employees in order to have equal data on the effectiveness of the digitalized process in the viewpoint of the employees and the users.

Talking about digitalization meaning that the users has an access to and use of ICT. Study shows that the effect of digitalization can be readily seen strongly in developed countries rather than in developing countries, where governments could fully benefit from digitalization by adopting policies that promote access to and use of ICT at all levels of the economy - government, businesses, and individuals (Wandaogo, 2022).

e-government/digitalization services implications to socio-economic gap

Gender and other sociodemographic characteristics (such as age, level of education and other contextual variables) are essential to a better understanding of the digital divide and its implications on e-gov service use (Macaya, Ribeiro, Jereissati, dos Reis Lima, & Cunha, 2021). The digital divide remains a barrier to effective e-government use (Gray, Gainous, & Wagner, 2017). Women in the developing world have significantly lower technology participation rates than men (Almeida et al., 2020). Use of e-gov content and services is pervasive and is closely linked to gender and level of education (Akman, Yazici, Mishra, & Arifoglu, 2005). Normally, as education level increases, so does usage of Internet.

Use of e-gov content and services is pervasive and is closely linked to gender and level of education (Akman et al., 2005). Generally, as education level rises, so does usage of Internet.

Furthermore, gender gap in using Internet was reported to be wider in less advanced countries (Mellor, Parr, & Hood, 2001) and gender differences in the perception of e-gov seem to be significantly large in France (Mellor et al., 2001).

The IDC study estimates that Finland presently offers the most advanced e-gov services in Europe, followed by Italy, Spain, and France. In 2001, an Accenture study released that Canada led 22 countries in e-gov and ranked Singapore second in world for offering e-gov solutions. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit 2001 survey, Singapore is the first in Asia for e-business readiness.

Young and highly educated people profited more from the Internet than seniors and low-educated people. The gender benefits were equal except for political participation, where males found more advantages (Van Dijk, 2013). Use of e-gov content and services is pervasive and is closely linked to gender and level of education (Akman et al., 2005). Generally, as education level rises, so does usage of Internet.

Theory Base

Time study, originated by Taylor, was used primarily for determining time standards, while motion study, developed by the Gilbreths, was employed mostly for the same time. Greater use was made of time study and wage incentive than motion study (Barnes, 1980). It was not until the 1930s that a general movement got underway to study work with the objective of finding better and simpler methods of getting the job done. Then there followed a period during which motion study and time study were used together, the two supplement each other, and the combined term motion and time study came into use.

The motion and time study aims to determine what/which to improve the effectiveness and the productivity of the work place. Improved working practices increase productivity and lessen worker tiredness. Effectiveness is dependent on both intelligence and effort. While the quantitative research will be used to measure the collected data from the respondents with respect to their response on the questionnaire regarding the digitalization of the OEC.

Conceptual Framework

The research framework that will be employed is shown in Figure 1. First, the research assesses the respondents' level of awareness about the digitalization of OEC, and their priorities for productivity using time and motion study.

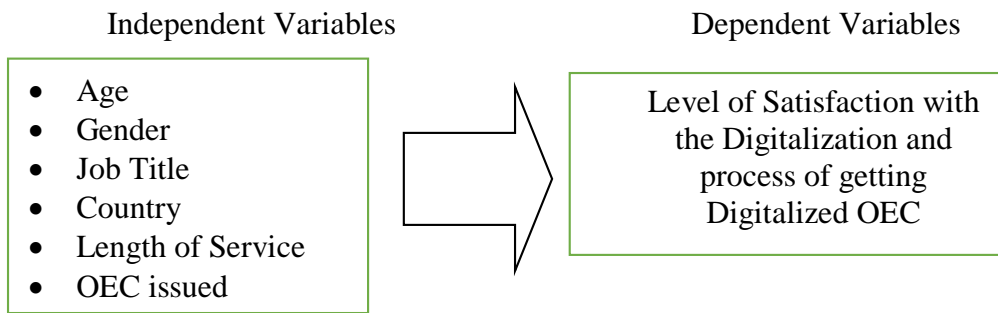


Figure 1. Awareness and Satisfaction Assessment

Figure 2. As a result, this research will identify the benefits and problems associated with the implementation of the digitalization of OEC.

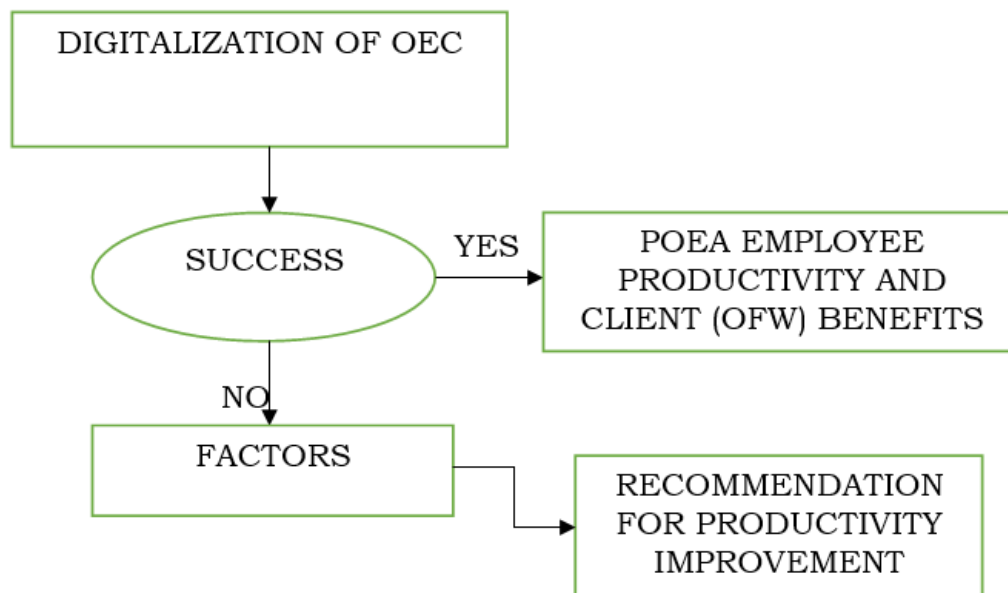


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Time and Motion Study

Research Assumptions /Research Hypothesis (es)

The time and motion theory significantly show that the digitalization of OEC improves resource allocation and planning among DMW employees. Knowing how much time and movement a certain task will demand can help allocate the necessary resources. Thus, benefit their clientele, saving time and cost efficiently.

METHODOLOGY

Method Used

This research will be adopting quantitative research study employing likert scale and time and motion study since this research is aimed to find out the effectiveness and satisfaction of digitizing OEC. The quantitative process aims to find the result from the data gathered in form of numbers to analyze the information about what the researcher would like to find out (Bryman, 2012). This qualitative research will be using Time and Motion Study to determine the productivity and benefits. Thus, increased productivity (Niebel, 1988).

According to Barnes (1980), motion and time study as the systematic study of work systems with the following objectives: (1) developing the preferred system and method—typically the one with the lowest cost; (2) standardizing this system and method; (3) figuring out how long it would take a qualified and appropriately trained person working at a normal pace to complete a specific task or operation; and (4) assisting in training the worker in the preferred method.

Moreover, it also employs Likert Scale which is one of the most fundamental and frequently used psychometric tools in educational and social sciences research (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). It is a unidimensional scale that researchers use to collect respondents' attitudes and opinions on the digitalization of OECs.

Hence, effectiveness and productivity have many diverse connotations, it is most frequently connected to worker efficiency and clients satisfaction.

Sources of Data

This study will be gathering primary data sample from random employees and clients of POEA consequently with direct observation to the Citizen's Charter to determine the effectiveness and benefits.

Data Gathering Instrument

The researcher will be using two tools to analyze the benefits and effectiveness of the process.

First, a survey questionnaire to gather the necessary data needed for the research. The to-be-prepared instrument concentrated on providing a response to the problem statement. The effects of the digitalization of the OEC, both good and bad.

On the other hand, to measure the time and motion, the researcher will observe the task in real-time. In this approach, the researcher will sit beside the evaluator as they do the task. Observe what they do, breaking the task into smaller components as the researcher record times.

Sampling Technique

Respondents to the study are:

1. 100 clients will be selected by random sampling. There are 100 respondents total among the chosen respondents, and anyone in the population has a chance of being included in the sampling procedure that will be employed here.
2. DMW employees directly connected with the processing of OECs.

Procedure of the Study

Validity and reliability of data collection methods will be determined, along with questions that are suited for the study and all necessary changes to the selected respondents. One hundred (100) of the questionnaires will be successfully finished and returned. In accordance with the consent of the respondents and the researchers, their corresponding answers to the inquiry are thus retained. The information will be arranged and tallied in accordance with the findings of the statistical analysis.

While data on the recorded observation of process will be encoded and analyze to come up with an ideal process cycle time.

Statistical Treatment

To analyze and Interpret the data, the researcher will be employing *Frequency, percentage, and ranking*. This will help the researcher to easily tally the data that they gathered. This percentage and ranking will be a big help in the researchers to analyze the data. Inferential Statistics will also be used to further interpret the data.

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