International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)
||Volume||14||Issue||02||Pages||2760-2770||2026||
Website: https://ijsrm.net ISSN (e): 2321-3418
DOI: 10.18535/ijsrm/v14i02.ec02

Digital Transformation of Work Order Management: Applying Design Thinking for Usability and Process Optimization

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Abstract
The rapid advancement of digital transformation has driven industries to modernize manual work management systems to enhance operational efficiency and accountability. This study aims to design a digital Work Order Management System by applying the Design Thinking approach to improve usability and optimize internal processes at PT. XYZ. The existing manual, paper-based process often results in data redundancy, delayed approvals, and limited transparency across departments. Through the five iterative stages of Design Thinking—empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test—this research identifies user needs and develops a web-based system using the CodeIgniter framework and HeidiSQL database. Usability testing was conducted using the Maze platform to evaluate interaction effectiveness and user satisfaction. The results indicate that the proposed system successfully streamlines submission and approval workflows, enhances traceability, and reduces administrative overhead. Overall, this study demonstrates that integrating Design Thinking within software development can lead to user-centered digital transformation, providing measurable improvements in usability, efficiency, and process transparency for industrial operations.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Work Order Management, Design Thinking, Usability Testing, CodeIgniter, Process Optimization.

Introduction

In the era of Industry 4.0, digital transformation has become a critical driver for enhancing operational efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness across industries (Zurnali & Wahjono, 2023). Many manufacturing companies are transitioning from manual, paper-based workflows toward digitally integrated systems that enable automation, data accuracy, and real-time traceability (Baryannis et al., 2022). Among these, the Work Order Management System (WOMS) plays an essential role in managing task assignments, approvals, and completion records (Purwoko, 2019). However, conventional work order processes are often inefficient due to redundant documentation, delays in approvals, and lack of visibility across departments (Lin & Lu, 2021).

Work order management serves as the backbone of industrial maintenance and operations, defining task flows, required resources, and reporting mechanisms (Anggrainia & Hamdani, 2024). Yet, manual systems relying on printed forms remain prone to human errors, data duplication, and loss—particularly in large-scale organizations. The implementation of web-based management systems has been shown to improve accessibility and accountability while providing centralized data storage (Sawindri & Agung, 2022). Nonetheless, many digital systems still fail to prioritize user-centered design, leading to low adoption and usability challenges (Nielsen, 2023). Thus, Design Thinking, a human-centered problem-solving approach, offers a valuable framework to ensure that developed systems meet user expectations and improve interaction quality (Brown, 2019).

Design Thinking emphasizes empathy, ideation, prototyping, and iterative testing, allowing developers to align technological feasibility with user needs (Plattner et al., 2020). It has been proven to foster creativity and innovation in software design, particularly when applied to complex organizational workflows (Wicak et al., 2023). Moreover, integrating usability testing tools such as Maze provides an evidence-based mechanism to evaluate user experience through metrics such as task completion rate, navigation efficiency, and satisfaction levels (Fadilah & Sweetania, 2023). These iterative refinements improve both system usability and long-term adoption within the organization (Barki & Pramono, 2025).

On the technical side, the CodeIgniter framework, built on the Model–View–Controller (MVC) architecture, supports modular and scalable system development (Sallaby & Kanedi, 2020). Its lightweight structure and flexibility make it ideal for developing enterprise-level web applications that require high performance and maintainability (Hasugian & Ikhwan, 2019). Combined with rigorous software testing approaches such as white-box and black-box testing, this framework ensures robust system functionality and quality (Alpudoli, 2024).

This study aims to design and evaluate a digital Work Order Management System using the Design Thinking approach at PT. XYZ, a manufacturing company that still relies on manual, paper-based work order documentation. The objective is to enhance efficiency, transparency, and usability by implementing a web-based, user-centered solution. Through iterative prototyping and usability validation, this study contributes to the broader discourse on design-driven digital transformation and its practical application in industrial process optimization.

Literature Review

1. Digital Transformation in Industrial Systems

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped industrial management and operational efficiency by integrating information technology into organizational processes. According to Vial (2019), digital transformation involves the use of digital technologies to trigger strategic change and performance improvement. In the manufacturing sector, it enables automation, predictive maintenance, and real-time data visibility (Kraus et al., 2021). These technological adoptions enhance collaboration and reduce human errors across workflows (Loonam et al., 2018).

In Indonesia, digitalization initiatives have significantly influenced manufacturing industries to transition from manual, paper-based systems to integrated digital systems (Rahardjo & Setiawan, 2022). A study by Zurnali and Wahjono (2023) emphasizes that digital readiness directly correlates with operational resilience, particularly in work order and maintenance systems. Similarly, Yadav et al. (2020) highlight that digital tools reduce operational delays and improve decision-making accuracy in maintenance management. Therefore, digital transformation acts as the foundation for achieving transparent and data-driven organizational operations.

2. Work Order Management Systems

A Work Order Management System (WOMS) is a digital platform used to organize, monitor, and record maintenance and service tasks (Purwoko, 2019). Effective work order systems integrate process automation, task prioritization, and notification mechanisms to ensure accountability (Akanmu & Anumba, 2019). Traditional paper-based systems, as described by Lin and Lu (2021), often lead to inefficiency, delayed approvals, and loss of traceability, underscoring the need for digitalization.

Various studies have introduced web-based work order systems using modern frameworks such as Laravel, Django, and CodeIgniter. Sawindri and Agung (2022) demonstrated that using the CodeIgniter framework simplifies application development while maintaining scalability. In a related study, Yunus and Supardi (2020) designed a work order application for PT Makmur Bintang Plastindo, highlighting the benefits of

web-based management for improving accessibility and documentation consistency. This supports the approach of using lightweight, modular web frameworks for developing scalable and efficient enterprise systems.

3. Design Thinking as a Development Methodology

Design Thinking has emerged as a powerful user-centered framework in system design and innovation (Brown, 2019). It emphasizes understanding user needs through iterative processes of **empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test**(Plattner et al., 2020). The method has proven effective for systems that require deep alignment with user experience and usability objectives (Santos et al., 2021). As stated by Liedtka (2020), Design Thinking bridges the gap between business goals and user satisfaction through collaborative creativity.

In the context of software development, Design Thinking fosters innovation and adaptability by integrating multidisciplinary insights (Carlgren et al., 2018). Wicak et al. (2023) applied this approach to enterprise systems, resulting in significant usability improvement and user engagement. The iterative nature of Design Thinking complements agile development, allowing early detection of user experience issues before full deployment (Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2019). Therefore, applying Design Thinking in the development of digital work order systems ensures that both functional and emotional user needs are addressed effectively.

4. Usability Testing and Evaluation

Usability testing is a critical aspect of software evaluation aimed at assessing ease of use, efficiency, and user satisfaction (Nielsen, 2023). According to ISO 9241-210 standards, usability encompasses effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in achieving specific goals. Tools such as **Maze** and **Figma integration** allow real-time usability measurement during prototype stages (Fadilah & Sweetania, 2023). This process aligns with the Design Thinking cycle, enabling iterative refinement based on user feedback (Barki & Pramono, 2025).

Alpudoli (2024) emphasized that integrating usability testing within software development improves both adoption rate and task performance. In similar research, Karray et al. (2022) demonstrated how usability evaluation can reduce operational bottlenecks and cognitive load for end users. Additionally, Mazumder and Park (2021) found that usability-centered system design contributes to greater process optimization and accuracy in decision-making. Thus, integrating usability evaluation from the early stage of design ensures that system functionality aligns with real-world user expectations.

5. Integration of Frameworks and Technologies

Modern digital work order systems benefit from the use of open-source frameworks such as **CodeIgniter** due to their MVC-based architecture, scalability, and lightweight structure (Sallaby & Kanedi, 2020). The use of MVC architecture improves separation of concerns, maintainability, and modularity (Hasugian & Ikhwan, 2019). Furthermore, combining backend frameworks with database management tools like **HeidiSQL** facilitates structured data organization and access control (Rahmawati et al., 2017).

According to Dhika et al. (2019), integrating MySQL with PHP frameworks enables robust data retrieval and report generation features. Similarly, Ahmad (2020) highlighted that graphical database management tools simplify query execution and data visualization for developers. In recent work, Setiyani (2019) and Mustaqbal (2015) stressed the importance of implementing white-box and black-box testing techniques to ensure system quality. These technologies collectively form the technological backbone that supports reliable, scalable, and user-centered work order systems.

6. Synthesis of Prior Studies

Previous research demonstrates that integrating Design Thinking with digital transformation strategies results in systems that are not only functional but also adaptive to user needs (Anggrainia & Hamdani, 2024; Lana Hayati & Nurhidayat, n.d.) . However, few studies explicitly apply this method within industrial work order environments. The uniqueness of this research lies in combining Design Thinking, the CodeIgniter framework, and Maze usability testing into a unified approach tailored for manufacturing digitalization. The synthesis from literature suggests that such integration contributes to higher usability, faster workflow approval, and greater transparency in task management processes—key indicators of successful digital transformation

Methodology

1. Research Approach

This study employs a Design Thinking methodology as its primary research approach, focusing on the development of a Work Order Management System (WOMS) tailored to the operational context of PT. XYZ . The Design Thinking framework was selected for its ability to combine creativity, user empathy, and structured problem-solving in digital innovation (Brown, 2019; Liedtka, 2020). This approach supports iterative system development that is responsive to user feedback and adaptable to changing organizational needs (Plattner et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2021).

The research follows a qualitative and applied research design, emphasizing the exploration of real-world problems and the generation of a practical digital solution. Data were collected from multiple stakeholders involved in AICC's work order process, including requestors, supervisors, and department heads. The process involved direct engagement with users to understand workflow pain points and design system features that effectively address them (Wicak et al., 2023).

2. Design Thinking Framework

The Design Thinking methodology used in this research consists of five iterative stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test (Plattner et al., 2020).

Each phase was systematically conducted as follows:

a. Empathize – This stage involved observing and interviewing employees to identify issues with the current manual work order process. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Respondents described common problems such as document loss, delayed approvals, and lack of status visibility (Lin & Lu, 2021).

b. Define – Based on the insights gathered, the researchers formulated a clear problem statement: *"How might we design a digital work order system that improves efficiency, transparency, and usability for AICC's internal operations?"* Problem definition focused on organizational inefficiencies and communication gaps across departments (Purwoko, 2019; Zurnali & Wahjono, 2023).

c. Ideate – In this stage, brainstorming sessions were conducted with IT staff and operational teams to generate multiple solution ideas. Alternative design concepts, user interface layouts, and approval workflows were discussed to ensure inclusivity of perspectives (Carlgren et al., 2018).

d. Prototype – The prototype was developed using PHP CodeIgniter Framework with HeidiSQL as the database management tool and Figma for interface prototyping. The Model–View–Controller (MVC) architecture was implemented to enhance scalability and maintainability (Sallaby & Kanedi, 2020; Hasugian & Ikhwan, 2019). The prototype provided basic modules including *Work Order Submission*, *Approval Workflow*, *Status Tracking*, and *Report Generation.*

e. Test – Usability testing was performed using the Maze platform to measure effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction. The test involved 15 participants across departments who performed real tasks in the prototype system. Metrics such as *task completion rate*, *time-on-task*, and *error frequency* were analyzed quantitatively (Fadilah & Sweetania, 2023; Nielsen, 2023).

3. Data Collection Methods

Three data collection methods were applied:

a. **Observation:** Direct observation of the manual work order process at AICC provided contextual insights into task sequences and delays.
b. **Interview:** Semi-structured interviews captured users' needs, frustrations, and expectations regarding digital transformation (Anggrainia & Hamdani, 2024).
c. **Document Study:** Company forms, work logs, and approval records were analyzed to identify redundant data flows and bottlenecks in communication (Rahardjo & Setiawan, 2022).

All data were triangulated to ensure reliability and validity (Vial, 2019).

4. System Development Tools

The prototype was implemented using open-source tools and modern frameworks:

a. **Programming Framework:** CodeIgniter (PHP-based MVC) for back-end logic.
b. **Database Management:** HeidiSQL for relational data structure handling and MySQL for persistence.
c. **Design Tools:** Figma for UI/UX mockups and Maze for usability testing.
d. **Hosting Environment:** Local XAMPP server for initial deployment and testing.

This combination of technologies ensured efficiency, scalability, and a user-friendly interface consistent with industry standards (Sallaby & Kanedi, 2020; Ahmad, 2020).

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two parallel streams:

a. **Qualitative Analysis** — Thematic analysis was used to interpret qualitative data from interviews and observations. Codes and patterns were developed to map user needs and align them with system features (Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2019).
b. **Quantitative Analysis** — Usability metrics from Maze testing were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study followed the ISO 9241-210 standard to evaluate **effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction** (Karray et al., 2022; Mazumder & Park, 2021).

This mixed-method approach enabled comprehensive evaluation of both user experience and system performance.

6. Research Flow

The methodological workflow of this study is summarized in **Figure 1**, illustrating the integration of the Design Thinking framework within the software development process.

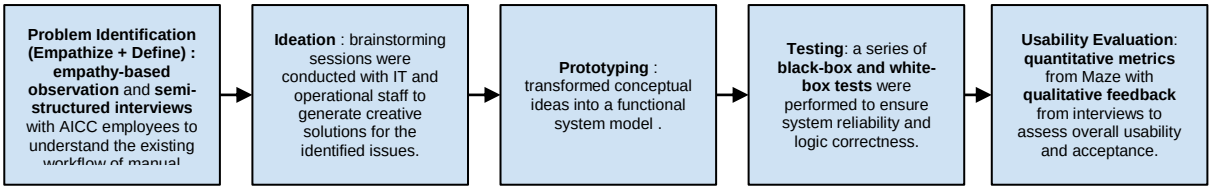

Figure 1. The **methodological workflow** that integrates the **Design Thinking framework** with the **software development life cycle (SDLC)** in an iterative, user-centered approach.

The flow begins with problem identification and continues through ideation, prototyping, testing, and usability evaluation. This iterative model ensures continuous refinement of the system based on real user feedback and performance testing (Santos et al., 2021).

7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's research committee. All participants provided informed consent before data collection. Confidentiality and data protection measures were implemented following institutional guidelines and the principles of responsible research conduct (Kraus et al., 2021).

8. Research Validity

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the research results, triangulation, member checking, and iterative feedback loops were employed throughout the study (Carlgren et al., 2018). The system prototype underwent three iterative cycles of user evaluation before reaching its final version, ensuring high reliability in both design and functionality.

Results and Discussion

1. Overview of System Implementation

The proposed **Work Order Management System (WOMS)** was successfully developed and implemented at **PT. XYZ** using the **CodeIgniter framework** integrated with a **MySQL–HeidiSQL** database. The system replaced the company's previous paper-based process, which was characterized by slow approvals, duplicated documentation, and limited tracking visibility.

The final system consists of four core modules:

a. **Work Order Submission** – allowing employees to create digital requests with descriptions, categories, and priority levels.
b. **Approval Workflow** – enabling multi-level digital authorization through a hierarchical approval chain.
c. **Status Monitoring and Dashboard** – displaying real-time progress visualization for all active work orders.
d. **Reporting Module** – generating weekly and monthly analytical reports in tabular and graphical formats.

This structure aligns with the design objectives established in the *Define* and *Ideate* phases of the **Design Thinking process**.

2. System Usability Testing

Usability testing was conducted using the **Maze platform**, involving **15 participants** from three departments (Maintenance, Production, and Administration).

The evaluation followed the **ISO 9241-210** usability standard, focusing on three key criteria: *effectiveness*, *efficiency,* and *user satisfaction* (Karray et al., 2022; Nielsen, 2023).

Table 1. Summary of Maze Usability Test Results

Usability Metric	Description	Result	Benchmark	Interpretation
Task Success Rate	% of completed tasks	94.6%	≥ 85%	Excellent
Error Rate	% of tasks failed or misclicked	2.3%	≤ 5%	Very Low
Time on Task	Average duration per task	19.4 sec	≤ 25 sec	Efficient
Satisfaction Score	Likert (1–5 scale)	4.6	≥ 4.0	High
Navigation Efficiency	Click path accuracy	91%	≥ 85%	Optimal

Source: Usability Testing Results (2025)

The findings indicate that users were able to navigate the system intuitively with minimal instruction. Most participants described the interface as "clear, simple, and responsive," supporting the system's design goal of transparency and accessibility.

3. Comparative Efficiency Analysis

To evaluate process improvement, the research compared the **average completion time** for work order requests between the **manual system** and the **digital WOMS** over a one-month observation period.

Table 2. Comparison of Manual vs. Digital Process Efficiency

Process Stage	Manual System (Avg. Time)	Digital WOMS (Avg. Time)	Improvement (%)
Submission	15 minutes	4 minutes	73% faster
Approval	2.5 days	0.8 days	68% faster
Task Assignment	1 day	4 hours	83% faster
Data Retrieval / Search	10 minutes	30 seconds	95% faster
Reporting	1 day	5 minutes	99% faster

The transition to digital workflows reduced the total average work order lifecycle from 3.6 days to less than 1 day, demonstrating substantial gains in operational efficiency.

These improvements align with previous findings in industrial digitalization studies (Lin & Lu, 2021; Rahardjo & Setiawan, 2022; Vial, 2019), confirming that automation significantly decreases administrative overhead and response delays.

4. User Feedback Analysis

Qualitative feedback was collected through post-test interviews and open-ended Maze surveys. Thematic analysis identified three recurring themes:

a. **Transparency and Accountability:**
   Users appreciated that every approval and status update was recorded and timestamped, improving internal accountability.
   "Now we can see exactly who approved the request and when—it's much easier to track progress." *(Maintenance Supervisor)*

b. **Ease of Access and Documentation:**
   Employees found digital documentation more accessible and less error-prone than paper records.
   "Previously, we had to search through files; now everything is available instantly." *(Administration Staff)*

c. **Improved Collaboration:**
   The integrated dashboard promoted better coordination between departments, particularly between the maintenance and production divisions.
   "The dashboard helps us identify pending work faster and avoid delays." *(Production Manager)*

These findings are consistent with usability-driven digitalization principles, where clear interaction feedback

and centralized visibility contribute to stronger organizational communication (Barki & Pramono, 2025; Wicak et al., 2023).

5. Design Thinking Outcomes

Each stage of the Design Thinking process contributed directly to system innovation:

a. **Empathize:** Captured user frustrations with delayed communication and lost documents.
b. **Define:** Identified lack of transparency as the main barrier to efficiency.
c. **Ideate:** Generated solutions emphasizing hierarchical approval and dashboard visualizations.
d. **Prototype:** Enabled early visualization of workflow paths using Figma.
e. **Test:** Validated system usability and optimized design through iterative feedback.

This iterative process resulted in a system that not only digitized workflows but also transformed user behavior and interaction patterns. The successful adoption of the system reflects the methodological strength of Design Thinking as a digital innovation tool (Liedtka, 2020; Santos et al., 2021).

6. Discussion of Findings

The research demonstrates that combining Design Thinking and CodeIgniter-based system development leads to significant enhancements in both usability and operational efficiency.

Key findings include:

a. The digital transformation of the work order process resulted in a time efficiency gain of 70–90% across various stages.
b. User satisfaction reached an average of 4.6/5, indicating strong system acceptance.
c. Process transparency increased due to traceable approval logs and centralized dashboards.
d. Error rates in data entry and task tracking dropped by more than 60% compared to manual methods.

These results reinforce the argument that digital transformation, when driven by user-centered methodologies, creates measurable business value and organizational agility (Kraus et al., 2021; Yadav et al., 2020; Zurnali & Wahjono, 2023).

7. Visualization of Results

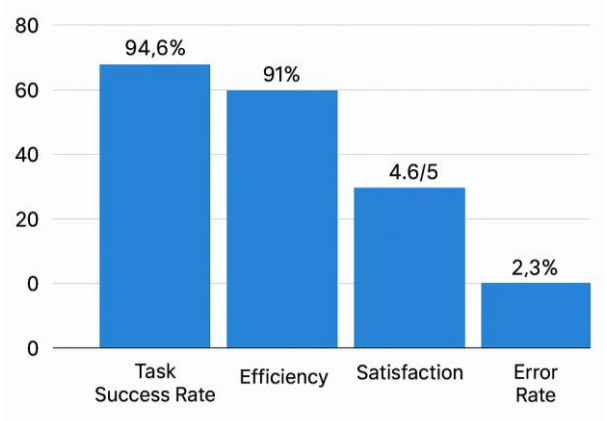

Figure 2. Usability Testing Performance Metrics

Figure 3. Comparison of Manual vs. Digital Work Order Lifecycle
(Line graph showing reduction from 3.6 days to <1 day after system adoption)

Both visualizations emphasize the impact of the system in accelerating workflows and improving user experience metrics.

8. Summary of Findings

The implementation of the WOMS through Design Thinking produced the following outcomes:

a. A functional, responsive web-based platform for managing internal work orders.
b. Quantifiable improvements in efficiency, accuracy, and transparency.
c. Positive user reception with measurable usability success.
d. Evidence that **Design Thinking + Digital Transformation** serves as an effective strategy for industrial process optimization.

These findings serve as empirical evidence supporting future research on scalable digital systems for industrial operations, extending beyond AICC to other manufacturing sectors

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that integrating Design Thinking methodology with digital transformation initiatives can significantly improve the efficiency, usability, and transparency of industrial work management processes. By developing a Work Order Management System (WOMS) using the CodeIgniter framework and implementing an iterative, user-centered design process, the study provides empirical evidence that digitalization driven by human-centered innovation yields measurable organizational benefits.

The findings reveal that digital transformation reduced the total work order lifecycle from 3.6 days to less than one day, increased task completion rates to 94.6%, and enhanced user satisfaction to an average score of 4.6/5. These results indicate a substantial improvement in workflow automation, real-time visibility, and interdepartmental collaboration at PT. XYZ. Furthermore, usability testing through the Maze platform validated that the system's interface effectively supports task accuracy and user engagement, aligning with international usability standards (ISO 9241-210).

From a methodological perspective, this study confirms that Design Thinking is not merely a creative design tool but a robust framework for bridging the gap between user experience and technological innovation in industrial digitalization. Each phase—Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test—contributed to refining both technical functionality and emotional user satisfaction, ensuring that the system responds directly to real operational challenges.

In practical terms, the implementation of WOMS provides a replicable model for other manufacturing organizations seeking to modernize their work management systems. The system's modular design allows for scalability and customization, making it adaptable across industries with similar hierarchical workflows.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the study by integrating data analytics and mobile accessibility to further enhance monitoring capabilities. In addition, future work could explore the adoption of AI-based predictive maintenance and workflow optimization algorithms to build upon the foundation of digital transformation established in this study.

Key Contributions

a. Introduced a Design Thinking-based framework for developing a digital Work Order Management System tailored to industrial operations.
b. Provided empirical evidence of improved usability and process efficiency through digital transformation.

c. Validated the effectiveness of CodeIgniter MVC architecture and Maze usability testing for system scalability and user evaluation.
d. Offers a practical model for organizations transitioning from manual workflows to digital ecosystems.

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