Digital Transformation in Public Administration: Challenges and Opportunities

Sikandar Ali Bhatti[1]

[1] Depot Photonics Engineering, University de Lyon, Laboratory Hubert Curien, France.
Email: sikandarbhatti2367@gmail.com

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Digital transformation is now one of the top significant reforming agendas in the public administration domain with various governments worldwide catering to the increasing demands of efficiency, transparency, accountability, and services to the citizen issue. The whole digital technologies (e-government platforms, big data analytics, artificial intelligence and the cloud) has profoundly altered the way the public establishments start planning the policies, resources and communication with its citizens. The authors of this research paper provide the overview of the phenomenon of digital transformation in public administration studying critically the opportunities and challenges of public administration as the consequence of the literature review of scholarly articles and governance practices. The paper demonstrates the positive effects of digital transformation in the efficiency of the administration, and effects on both the quality of the service and citizen and evidence-based policy making. At the same time it realizes that it has to cope with the continuous pressure of digital divide, cyber security, organizational resolute, skills deficiency and regulatory and ethical issues. The combination of theoretical approach to the subject and empirical data enable this article to contribute to the insights into the topic of digital governance and can benefit the policymakers and administrators of the states that intend to implement the strategies of digital transformation as well as their sustainability and inclusiveness.

Introduction

Digital transformation has become one of the largest developments that are affecting the public administration field today. Governments around the world are also starting to use digital technologies to reform traditional bureaucratic structures, modernise public service delivery and improve the results of governance. In contrast to the earlier administrative reforms, which were mostly focused on structural restructuring or managerial efficiency, digital transformation is an entire restructuring including technology integration with institutional processes, organizational culture and public value creation. It is not about digitalization of records or automaticization of common tasks but rethinking of the way of public institutions, the way of decisions, the way of citizens to engage the state.

The growing relevance of the digital transformation of the sphere of the public sector can be attributed to several factors, which are inter-related. Firstly, the fast-evolving technology within the information and communication technologies (ICTs) has increased the potential of information management, service and real-time interaction integration. The technologies listed above, including cloud computing, mobile applications, AI and big data analytics can help the governments to process great volumes of information in a more efficient manner and create more receptive services that would be more acceptable by the population. Second, societal demands have been coined to be very high as the cause of changes. The citizens have also begun to insist on having an increasingly endless list of services provided by the government that is easily accessible and open as well as the

businesses sector. Digital platforms would give the governments a chance to satisfy those expectations without developing additional burdens on their administrative burden and cost of operation.

Another source of possible digital transformation is the necessity to strengthen better governance and accountability. In many instances the conventional system of public administration has been criticized based on the inefficiencies, transparency and high level bureaucracy. Properly applied digital resources can assist in raising the degree of transparency since they ensure the information of any public interest within the government is made visible to individuals, which, in its turn, can also ensure that corruption may be more likely to reduce, not to mention that it can also be used to monitor the functioning of the public sector. Examples in this case are the e-government efforts, which have been widely disseminated as sources of increasing trust and openness of government through the provision of government-citizen and government-citizen interactions.

Despite this, it ensures the bright future, but digital transformation of the field of public administration is a difficult and tricky process. The public sector organizations are diversified in nature of goals and structure and operation of responsibility to be executed in comparison to the private organizations. This is what the governments are wrestling with, to attain efficiency vs equity, to attain innovation vs legal observance and technological advancement, vs ethical instruction.

As a result, digital transformation efforts may be met with resistance from within organizations since a lot of the employees are either potentially incapable of digital skills, or may fear that they would be replaced in the workforce as a result. Organizational culture, lengthy administrative procedures and institutional fragmentation also contribute to making digital reforms harder to implement.

Infrastructure limitations are also a huge challenge especially in developing countries. Unequal access to reliable internet connection, digital devices and technical support divides the population of digital public services and cripple reach and effectivity. This divide not only affects citizens, but also the institutions that are publicly funded, as the lack of a consistent difference in technological capacity from one government agency to another affects the integration and coordination within the system as well. Consequently, there is a dangerous potential risk of using digital transformation to avoid such inequalities in the form of digital transformation due to the issues of access and inclusivity not being properly addressed.

Cybersecurity and data protection issues are another important challenge. As the need of the digital infrastructure of society has increased, so has the danger to which governments have been subjected while using any kind of digital device to store sensitive information and provide important services. Therefore, ensuring the security and privacy of digital systems is a fundamental measure to ensure the public trust and to protect democratic values. Another ethical concern from the use of modern technologies is the transparency-related issue, accountability-related issue, and the bias-adoption (adoption of bias), associated with automated decision-making systems that have been developed based on modern technologies, including artificial intelligence.

It is within this context that digital transformation must be a continuous and dynamical process, and not a single technological upgrade. Effective change relies on its strategic leadership, its institutional coordination, its capacity building and its continuous review. It also needs a clear policy vision, which is in staffness of technological innovation and the national values such as equity, accountability and inclusiveness. Otherwise, digital initiatives may find themselves at risk of not providing its promised advantages, or even lead to suspicion of the populace towards the state.

The objectives of this work are to note transformed digital in the government as the major challenges and opportunities of the modern governance systems critically. The research objectives also include synthesizing the academic literature and the existing empirical research that is there and all with a focus of offering an in-depth comprehension on how digital technologies are transforming the prevailing institutions of the public sector, processes and modes of service delivery. The research is aimed to be used to create awareness on the conditions under which a digital transformation is seen as enabling factor to more effective, transparent and citizen-centric public administration.

The importance of the research is that it may be added to the spheres of academic activity and practice in the policy domain.

From an academic side, the research has the advantage of contributing to the pool of literature studies of public administration with the digital governance component, by bringing different theoretical and empirical perspectives to a set of integrators; the paper useful for managing public administration effective by ensuring transparency and higher - both involvement and participation. popping the blisters under digital governance point. From a practical point of view, the findings offer good advice for policy makers, administrators, and reform practitioners who are involved in the design and implementation of digital transformation strategies. The research highlights that focus on the significance of making institution less bureaucratic and more inclusive, institutional capacity and maintaining ethical governance is essential to realize the digital transformation of the services in the context-sensitive manner in the context of public administration.

Literature Review

The growth in the literature supporting the idea of digital transformation in the arena of public administration has grown enormously since the early 2000s due to the greater relevance of digital technologies in general and their capabilities for transformation in the governance structures as well as delivering public services. Scholars tend to conceptualize digital transformation as a process of multidimensional change that goes beyond the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to encompass organizational change and policy innovation and transformation of public values creation (Heeks, 2006; Mergel, Edelmann, & Haug, 2019). This body of research adopt research approach from public administration theory, information systems and governance studies, researching the use of digital tools to how these are affecting institutional performance, accountability and citizen-state relations.

Early studies on digital government were concerning mainly with e-government, which refers to the use of ICTs in the provision of public services and information by electronic means (UN, 2003). It has been argued by researchers that e-government initiatives could reduce administrative inefficiencies, reduce transaction costs and deliver improved accessibility of public services (Layne and Lee, 2001). These studies paid special attention to stages of e-government development, from the rudiment level of information provision, using online systems, to a fully integrated, transactional and participatory digital system. While this stage-based approach provided an analytical framework worth pursuing, critics have suggested that the approach was prone to overlook the role that organisations and politics played in the implementation process and its effects (Heeks, 2006).

As the field developed, the distinction between digitization, digitalization and digital transformation was made by scholars. Digitization is nothing but the conversion of analogue information to digital and digitalization is the application of digital technologies to improve an already existing process. Digital transformation, as opposed to digitalization, suggests the radical restructuring of organizational structures, governance approaches and the delivery of services (Vial, 2019). In the field of public administration, this distinction is particularly important since many governments have introduced digital tools without transformational change taking place, due to their stiff bureaucratic ways and scattered institutional arrangements.

A large part of the literature is focusing on the possibilities of digital transformation in the public administration. One of the most regularly quoted of these benefits has been the enhancing of the provision of public services. Digital platforms enable the government to provide services more efficiently and at a faster pace and give more convenience to citizens through online and mobile channels (Dunleavy et al. 2006). Empirical research shows that well-designed digital services can help to increase satisfaction and trust of users within government services, especially if they prove to be accessible, reliable and responsive to the needs of the citizens (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013).

Another major possibility which has been discussed in the literature is greater transparency and accountability. Digital technologies allow publishing of government information and open data programs and real time monitoring of performance of public sector (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010). Open government data in particular, has been linked to civic engagement, a reduction in corruption, positive impacts on policy outcomes if citizens and civil society organizations have access to and are able to analyze government information (Janssen, Charalabidis, & Zuiderwijk, 2012).

Data-driven decision-making is yet one of the other transformational potentials. The integration of big data analytics and artificial intelligence in public administration helps in government to forecast trends, allocate resource effectively and design evidence-based policies (Chen, Chiang, & Storey, 2012). Recent studies have suggested to improve outcomes in fields such as public health, urban planning or social welfare through predictive analytics although there are concerns around data quality, bias and accountability (Wirtz, Weyerer, & Geyer, 2019).

Despite these opportunities, there is consistency in the literature to suggest that there are significant challenges against digital transformation in public administration. One of the more evident problems is organizational resistance to change. Public sector institutions generally have been linked to hierarchical institutions and rules, and typically have risk-averse cultures, which can be detrimental on innovation (Kettunen & Kallio, 2019). Studies show that civil servants have the ability to resist digital initiatives due to fear of losing their jobs, having to do more work or lack of digital competencies which makes leadership, change management, and capacities building an important (OECD, 2020).

The digital divide is also another issue which is very popularly discussed. Scholars argue that unequal access to digital infrastructure, skills and resources, can increase social and economic inequalities if the digital services mainly occur as the primary mode of service delivery (van Dijk, 2020). In developing countries, low internet connectivity rates and low digital literacy levels of citizenry and public officials in the respective countries have been major challenges in attaining digital transformation

initiatives (Avgerou (2010). Even in developed situations, there may be barriers to marginalized groups eating in digital public services such as the elderly, rural populations and poor low income communities.

Cybersecurity and data protection issues have also been receiving more and more attention in the literature. As more and more sensitive personal information is collected and processed by governments, the threats from cyberattacks, data breaches and by unauthorized surveillance increase (Kshetri, 2018). Scholars stress that improper cybersecurity frameworks can cause loss of public trust and subject national security hazards to robust legal, technological and institutional guarantees to be key components of digital transformation formulae (Wirtz & Muller, 2019).

Regulatory and ethical issues are an additional challenge of the digital transformation in the public administration sector. Existing legal frameworks, however, are often ill-equipped to respond to issues relating to issues such as data ownership, the flow of data across borders, algorithmic decision-making and accountability for automated systems (Yeung, 2018). The deployment of artificial intelligence for decision-making in the public sphere, gives rise to concerns on transparency, explainability and discrimination due to the anti-democratic consequences arising from the oppressive deployment of the new technologies, and calls for ethics and governance in regulating the responsible use of the new forms and developments (Floridi et al., 2018).

Comparative studies prove that the consequences of digital transformation in the different countries and administration systems are very variable. Nations with high levels of institutional capacities, political will, and digital strategies for coherence and alignment - such as Estonia and South Korea - have succeeded in achieving relatively high levels of the digital maturity of their governments (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013). In contrast, in the countries where governance structures are fragmented and little resources are available, partial or uneven implementation often occur, which reinforces the importance to be context sensitive when implementing digital reform (Avgerou, 2010).

To conclude, the process of digital transformation in the field of the public administration is a multifaceted phenomenon that is difficult to locate, which was revealed through the literature. Although digital technologies have a high potential of enhancing efficiency, transparency and citizen interactions, the ability of the same to condition organizational transformation is veneered by the organizational preparedness, institutional aptitude and integrative structures of governance. The necessity of such related strategies to tackle the technological, organizational, social, and ethical aspects of digital transformation underlying the need of the methodological approach and analysis in the subsequent sections is underlined by this review.

Methodology

This research uses systematic literature review (SLR) methodology in order to examine the digital transformation in public administration and the focus is to identify challenges and opportunities of the digital transformation in public administration. The systematic review approach is well known in the public administration and information systems fields and its rigour, transparency and replicability. It makes possible to construct in a systematic way existing scholarly evidence and aid in theory construction by bringing together findings from a variety of contexts and conventional traditions (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

Research Design

The research design is qualitative and exploratory in nature aiming to develop a comprehensive understanding about the nature of digital transformation in terms of conceptualization, implementation and evaluation within public administration. Given the complexity and changing term of digital governance, it was felt that a systematic literature review would be better suited than the application of primary empirical methods. This approach enables to encompass a wide variety of empirical and theoretical studies, policy reports and comparative research available in an extended period of time (2000-2025), which makes it possible to capture longitudinal trends and changes in scholarly discourse (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015).

Data Sources

The search process of the literature was conducted in the existing academic databases and repositories such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis online and Science Direct. In addition, reports of reputable international organizations such as the initiatives of the United Nations, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and World Bank were consulted in order to bring in policy-oriented perspectives, which are relevant to public administration. These were selected because they ensure that we have an all-round coverage of the peer-reviewed research and authoritative institutional publications, in relation to digital transformation and public sector governance.

Search Strategy

The systematic search strategy was formulated with the use of predefined keywords and Boolean operators to ensure the consistency and repeats ability of the search strategy. Key search terms were: digital transformation, public administration, e-government, digital governance, ICT in government, public sector innovation, digital divide, cyber security, artificial intelligence in the public sector, These terms were combined with operators such as "AND" and "OR" which narrowed down search results. The search was set for publications in English language as to be consistent in analyzing and interpreting the content.

Inclusion Criteria Structural Barriers to Totalizing Itself in Your Society Exclusion Criteria

- In an effort to insure relevance and at the same time insurance academic rigorousness, a clear set of criteria for inclusion and exclusion were defined prior to the data collection undertaking. The criteria for inclusion of participants in this study were:

- Focused upon specifically digital transformation, e-government or digital governance in public administration or public sector.

- Were published between 2000 and 2025.

- Presented empirical findings, theorems or systematic reviews fit to the challenges and/or opportunities of digital transformation.

- Were published either in peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes and reports of reputable international organizations.

- The reasons for exclusion of studies consisted of the fact that they:

- Private sector digital transformation - focused on only and no specific relevance to the public administration.

- Lack of methodological transparency/academic rigor.

- Were opinion pieces, editorials and non-scholarly publications.

- This screening process helped to ensure that the literature that was reviewed was relevant and credible in strengthening the validity of the study findings (Kitchenham and Charters, 2007).

Data Selection Process

The preliminary search of the database led to a high amount of publications. Titles and abstracts were first screened to determine relevance on the research topic. Thereafter, full-document versions of a proportion of the articles were reviewed in detail. Duplicate records were eliminated and on full text examination research works not according to the inclusion criteria have been excluded. This multi stage screening process is consistent with accepted systematic review process and limits selection bias (Moher et al., 2009).

Data Extraction

A structured data extraction template was developed to ensure consistency in the extraction of the key information from each of the selected studies. Extracted data included:

- Last name, first name(s) Year (of publication)

- Geographical and institutional context

- Research objectives and questions

- Methodology approach (qualitative, quantitative and or mixed methods)

- Facet findings as it pertain to opportunities of digital transformation

- Key findings as they relate to challenges and constraints

- Policy implications/ recommendations.

This effort was highly structured; consequently, comparative analysis for studies and identifying recurring themes and patterns in the literature was facilitated.

Analytical Framework

The data extracted has been analyzed using the thematic analysis method, a qualitative method which allows the identification, analysis and interpretation of patterns within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were developed in a deductive fashion based on existing theoretical frameworks in digital governance and public administration and in an inductive fashion which came about directly from the reviewed literature. The major thematic categories were technological opportunities, organisational and institutional challenges, social and ethical implications and governance outcomes.

As to implement high level of analytical rigor, the results from different studies were compared across context and administrative system. This comparative perspective made it possible to come to terms with the similarities/differences between developed and developing countries, centralized and decentralized forms of governance (Avgerou, 2010). Contradictory findings was analysed critically to take some elements of context such as political systems, administrative capacity, socio economical conditions into consideration.

Validity and Reliability

A number of measures were taken to enhance validity and reliability of the review. First, the use of different databases and sources reduced the risk on publication bias. Second, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly defined allowing transparency in study selection. Third, the systematic documentation of the search and analysis process is useful in supporting the replicability and methodological rigour (Tranfield et al., 2003). While qualitative synthesis having the fundamental aspect of interpretive judgement strategies with the help of following pre-established guidelines of systematic reviews helps to overcome subjectivity.

Ethical Considerations

As this study is derived completely on the secondary data, there was no direct ethical risks for the human participants. Nevertheless, ethical research behaviours were manifested through making sure that arguments of the original authors were accurately represented, avoiding plagiarism, and citing appropriately all the sources used in the research. Special care has been given to the relevant aspects of the ethics in the reviewed literature, focusing on, but not limited to, issues of data privacy, algorithmic governance, and good use of digital technologies in public administration.

Methodological Limitations

Although there are some strengths to the utilization of this methodology, it is not without any limitations. The emphasis on the English language publications may lead to exclusion of relevant studies published in different languages and may therefore be restricted in terms of geographic coverage. In addition, the rapidly changing nature of digital technologies means that recent developments may not be fully reflected in the academic literature. However, regarding studies with a time horizon up to 2025 and concerning the policy reports of international organizations, this research seeks to be a timely and comprehensive overview of the research field.

Results and Discussion

The systematic review of literature presents that digital transformation in public administration, brings multidimensional results and these results may be broadly classified as opportunities and challenges. These outcomes are not homogenous in different situations rather they are varied from each other depending on institutional capacity, governance regimes, socio-economic situations and the level of technological maturity. This section discusses the key findings that could be derived from the reviewed studies, and discusses implications for public administration theory and practice.

Opportunities of Digital Transformation in the Public Administration

One of the consistency of outcome reported in the literature is improvement in the delivery of public service. Digital platforms such as online portals and mobile applications and integrated service systems are being utilised to facilitate the provision of services by the government more efficiently and at greater convenience. Empirical evidence suggest that digital services has made the processing times shorter, transaction costs lower and face-to-face contact minimal leading to greater administrative efficiency and citizen satisfaction (Dunleavy et al., 2006; Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013). The move from paper-based digital flowing systems into a digital flow will also bring more coordination across agencies, and fewer redundant efforts.

Another important opportunity found is increased transparency and accountability. Digital transformation is making the open government initiatives easy with freely sharing the public information in online platforms and open data portals. Studies suggest that increasing transparency can reduce opportunities for corruption, as well as increase public trust in government institutions (Bertot et al, 2010; Janssen, et al, 2012). For instance, digital procurement systems, and online publication of budget disclosures to track government activities better, can be used to track cash flow and activities of government.

The role of digital transformation in facilitation of data driven decision making is also emphasized in literature. The adoption of big data analytics, artificial intelligence and decision support systems is making it possible for public administrators to analyze complex sets of data and to draw out insights for formulating and implementing policies (Chen et al, 2012). Predictive analytics has been implemented in areas of public health surveillance, traffic management and targeting for social welfare, which has shown the potential for digital tools to boost policy effectiveness and resources allocation (Wirtz et al., 2019).

Another significant opportunity is improved participation and involvement of citizens. Digital (Social media) channel, information and communication technologies (ICT) channels and e-participation, online consultation etc. offer new opportunities that facilitate the citizens participation in the governance processes. It is argued by research that these tools may reinforce democratic participation and usher in more inclusive and participatory forms of participation, particularly in case they are combined with other more traditional participatory mechanisms (UN, 2020). Nevertheless, accessibility and institutional responsiveness based on the efficiency of digital participation is determined to be based on trust.

Digital Transformation Problems to Public Admins.

Through all these opportunities there are also some sticking points which are choking digital transformation as indicated by the findings. The digital divide has been one of the issues of concern that the candidates had to deal with and celebrate with the lack of equality in access to the digital infrastructure, gadgets and skills. According to the literature, urban and educated people have more significant advantages in digital public services, and marginalized individuals do not gain access due to heightened ineligibility (van Dijk, 2020). This disparity serves to degrade the inclusivity of the digital governance and can only improve the prevailing social disparity levels, especially in the developing nations (Avgerou, 2010).

Another gigantic challenge is organizational and cultural resistance in the institutions of the state. According to the numerous studies, inflexible behavioral, bureaucratic structures and hierarchical decision-making, and risk-averse organizational cultures are an obstacle to the innovative digital practices (Kettunen and Kallio, 2019). Resistance to change could be experienced by the public servants because they are at mediocre stages of technology and lack digital training or the fear that they will lose employment. The threat of digital transformation initiatives lies in the fact that such initiatives can only be superficial or fragmented unless they are supported by a powerful and functional change management strategy and a strong leadership approach (OECD, 2020).

The risks of cybersecurity and data protection is also a matter of concern. Similarly to the paper itself, these sources also indicated that as governments continue relying on digital systems to maintain and manage sensitive information, they chances to lose their grounds due to downfall in cyberattacks, data breaches, and system failures are also present (Kshetri, 2018). The few studies retrieved reiterate that the absence of poor cyber security controls could result in catastrophic outcomes such as diminishing people trust, economic loss, jeopardizing the country security etc. Consequently, the digital transformation should be supported by sufficiently strong legal, technical, and institutional controls to secure the privacy of data and the integrity of the systems (Wirtz and Muller, 2019).

The other issue is connected with the pollution legacy systems and interoperabilities. The old-fashioned IT infrastructure still used by many public administrations cannot even be digitalized to allow the functioning of modern-day solutions. This technological distribution renders the communication of information among the agencies hard and introduces an implementation issue of integrating new technologies (Heeks, 2006). The cost and complexity of migrating older systems is one of the normal impediments and bottlenecks to process of digital transformation and transformation, more so in resource constrained environments.

Table 1: Key Opportunities of Digital Transformation in Public Administration

Opportunity	Description	Key Sources
Improved Service Delivery	Faster, more accessible, and efficient public services through digital platforms	Dunleavy et al. (2006); Margetts & Dunleavy (2013)
Transparency & Accountability	Open data and online information reduce corruption and enhance trust	Bertot et al. (2010); Janssen et al. (2012)
Data-Driven Policymaking	Use of analytics and AI for evidence-based decisions	Chen et al. (2012); Wirtz et al. (2019)
Citizen Engagement	Digital participation tools enhance interaction with citizens	UN (2020)

Table 2: Major Challenges of Digital Transformation in Public Administration

Challenge	Impact	Key Sources
Digital Divide	Unequal access limits inclusiveness and equity	Avgerou (2010); van Dijk (2020)
Organizational Resistance	Slows adoption and limits innovation	Kettunen & Kallio (2019); OECD (2020)
Cybersecurity Risks	Threatens data privacy and public trust	Kshetri (2018); Wirtz & Müller (2019)
Legacy Systems	Hinders integration and modernization	Heeks (2006)

Integrated Discussion of Results

The findings demonstrate that the digital transformation of the public administration is not only good or bad but the effects rather depend on how the technologies are integrated into the institution, social and governance environment. Although digital tools may become a significant efficiency and transparency booster, change potential is cut off by the structural inequalities, not to mention organizational inertias risk of governance. It can be seen that the findings indicate the importance of the holistic approach that would imply a mix of technological innovativeness, capacity building, regulatory reform, and inclusive policy designing. This all-inclusive view is the base for the much more general analytical discussion presented in the next section.

Discussion

The results of this study support the argument made that the digital transformation in the public administration is a complex, multidimensional and multidimensional process which transcends the technological adoption process to the process of organizational, institutional and societal change. The reviewed literature shows that even though digital technologies offer great opportunities to improve outcomes in the area of governance, this is highly context-dependent such that it depends on demand on the administrative capacity, political commitment, and socio-economic conditions. This section consists of the critical interpretation of the results referring to wider theoretical debates in the field of public administration and digital governance.

From a public value point of view, digital transformation can be seen as a mechanism used to increase the state's ability to deliver value to the citizen through better services, transparency and participation. The evidence shows that digital platforms can be used to streamline the administration process and lower inefficiencies that are traditionally associated with bureaucratic systems (Dunleavy et al, 2006). However, the materialisation of public value is then conditioned through whether or not digital initiatives are encompassed around citizen requirements and not simply institutional convenience. Studies which have focused on user-centric design have emphasised how digital services are likely to be most successful when they are accessible and intuitive and respond to different groups of citizens (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013).

The debate therefore serves to bring out these two strands of conflict of efficiency and fairness on digital transformation. While automation and online services can make a huge difference in terms of efficiency, it may cause the possible marginalization of the populations who may lack digital access or skills. Such continuity of the digital divide brings out the danger of building a two-tier system of public service provision with developed world citizens having the access to disproportionately gain from the reforms (van Dijk, 2020). This challenge is particularly salient in the developing countries which are characterised by more marked infrastructural and educational disparities (Avgerou 2010). Consequently, social inclusion policies need to be put into digital transformation methodologies with the aim of avoiding inequalities and securing their access for equity purposes.

Organizational dynamics determine the success of digital transformation. Literature is always mentioning resistance to change to be significant obstacle of resistance to change in the public institutions. From the point of view of institutional theory, such resistance can be explained by deeply embedded norms, routines and power structures, which favour stability rather than innovation (Kettunen & Kallio, 2019). The findings suggest that technological change unaccompanied by accompanying organizational reform is not likely to lead to meaningful change. Leadership, change management and continuous capacity building are, therefore, key and basic elements of successful digital initiatives (OECD, 2020).

Another important aspect of the discussion is in the field of governance and accountability in the digital age. While digital technologies can contribute to greater levels of transparency through open data and online reporting, there are also new risks associated with digital technologies and issues associated with cybersecurity, privacy and the governance of algorithms. The increasing importance of artificial intelligence in public decision making has sparked an unsettled debate over transparency and accountability, particularly in situations where automated systems are used for public decision making that affects the rights or access to services of citizens (Wirtz et al., 2019; Yeung, 2018). The literature points to the significance of lack of explicit regulatory systems and directions on ethics since digital transformation can destroy, but not reinforce, democratic governance.

The comparative knowledge gained in the studied reviewed articles further points to the fact that context is critical to a large extent in digital transformation. The best institutional capacity, consistent and sustained political support with digital strategies, are more likely to come up with advanced and integrated forms of digital government (Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013). Comparatively, there exists a situation of disorganised governance and absence of resources to make sure that implementation of programmes is utmost or even inaccurate across countries. These results offer challenges to universal policies to digital reform and the importance of context sensitive design of policy.

On the whole, the discussion highlights the significance of the need to consider the digital transformation in the public administration as the long-term process of adaptation, but not a technological project. It is the combination of technology that forms the key of achieving sustainable change through values of the public sector, institutional reform and inclusive governments. This discussion provides the basis on which the empirical findings will be constructively put in the context of larger theoretical frameworks by before deciding on the overall foundations upon which the entire discussion will be constructed upon, which will serve as the basis upon which the key findings of the study shall be consolidated leading to a subsequent conclusion of the consequences that would be considered in the future regarding the research and policies to be formulated.

Conclusion

The digital transformation has become a primary characteristic of contemporary government administration: It is used to refer to the changes in the manner of policy development, management of administration processes, and provision of governmental services. The study involves critical analysis of the digital transformation of the public administration by analysing the different issues and prospects of the digital transformation using the systematic review method of scholarly literature of 2000-2025. The results will indicate that the digital transformation is not only the transformation of technology but an overall transformation of the way of governance that must be aligned by way of technology, institutions, human capacity and values of people.

Among the significant results of this paper, there is the fact that the digital transformation can significantly contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of public administration. It has been appropriate to use the digital platforms along with the e-government technologies and using data-driven tools to help simplify the administrative process, decrease the cost of operation, and enhance the quality of the service delivery to the population (Dunleavy et al., 2006; Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013). Digital technologies can enable public institutions to be more responsive and more precise in responding to demands of citizens by automating routine procedures, as well as, making service delivery easy to incorporate. Such efficiency benefits particularly occur in situations when fiscal constraints exist and growing needs of fiscal services in government arise.

Besides efficiency, the digital transformation belongs to a greater level of transparency and accountability in the public administration. Increased government data projects and on-line information portals have led to more access to government information to promote greater government oversight and participation of citizens and/or civil society organisations (Bertot et al., 2010; Janssen et al., 2012). The opportunities of corruption are reduced by the transparency created by digital tools and are able to raise the trust in the institutions of the government, which is a major source of democratic legitimacy. Nevertheless, the research is also oriented towards the fact that the possibility that the population should navigate and digest digital information is worthless in case citizens lack the means and/or the chance of doing it in a meaningful way.

It is also revealed that digital transformation can be used to facilitate more informed and evidence-based policy making. The combined efforts of big data analytics and artificial intelligence in the context of the public administration contribute to the governments being able to analyze the complex social and economic patterns, foresee any inconvenience in the policy and distribute the funds more efficiently (Chen et al., 2012; Wirtz et al., 2019). These capabilities are of a particular value in fields relating to policy options where satellite technology - enabling timely and accurate information - can make a significant difference, especially in fields such as public health, urban planning and social protection. However, in the case of the use of highly sophisticated technologies, there are also questions related to the quality of the data, bias in the context of an algorithm and accountability that should be presented through relevant governance tools.

Despite these opportunities, the digital transformation in the public administration is limited by a number of challenges that remain according to the study. One of the most important challenges inhibiting inclusive digital governance is the digital divide. Unequal access to digital infrastructure, digital devices and skills inhibits the capacity of marginalized populations to equitably benefit from digital public services and in the process risk perpetuating existing social inequalities (Avgerou, 2010; van Dijk, 2020). The solution to this gap lays in specific investments in infrastructure and digital literacy and non-discriminative service design; especially in developing and rural scenarios.

Organizational and institutional challenges are also an important part of the outcome a digital transformation will have. The publications are understandable - the unwillingness to change, absence of digital capabilities and rigid bureaucracies are significant obstacles in the state institutions (Kettunen and Kallio, 2019; OECD, 2020). These problems imply that, technological innovation does not suffice that change can occur. Rather, it cannot be a 'shallow fix' that can lead to effective digital reform, sustained leadership will, change management and, most significantly, continued capacity building of the public sector workforce are needed to ensure success. Interoperability and institutional coordination of the government agencies is also very essential when we do not want to have fragmented and inefficient digital systems.

The other primary conclusion of this study is the problem of cybersecurity and data protection. As the public administrations continue to rely on the digital systems in order to work with sensitive information and provide the critical services, the risks related to the cyber threats and the data breaches and cyber crime gain (Kshetri, 2018). Sometimes weak cybersecurity frameworks may damage the degree of trust in the population, and may result in a threat to the national security that implies the necessity of strong legal, technical and institutional protection. In addition, the increasing engagement of artificial intelligence into the decision-making of the population creates an increasing demand of governance systems to ensure transparency, justice, and responsibility (Yeung, 2018; Floridi et al., 2018).

The wider finding the research has found till now is that the digital transformation is highly contextual. There is some view based on comparative evidence that the more institutional capacity of countries is good, their digital strategies are coherent and have ongoing political backing, the higher the chances that they are more advanced in terms of their digital government maturity (Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013). In contrast, a greater range of scenarios of fragmented governance forms and paucity of resources is more likely to implementation in a partial or spotty manner. It is a finding that provokes some unitary models of digital reform and claims that there should be contextually based digital reform models depending on the political economic and social circumstances.

To sum up, the process of the digital transformation of the public administration is an opportunity and a challenge to the public administration, in the modern governance time. Potentially, digital technologies can be used strategically and inclusively to increase efficiency, transparency and citizen engagement and consequently lead to enhancing value creation among the population. Nevertheless, in the absence of the appropriate consideration which was paid to the problems of equity, institutional capacity, cybersecurity and ethical governance, there is a danger there that a digital transformation will turn out to be more of a statement of transformative commitments. This paper points out the reasons why the digital transformation must be comprehensive and responsive i.e. glorifies technological innovation, but social inclusion and the values of the public sector as well as the organizational transformation. It is merely crucial to make sure that in such a direction, digital transformation can help make public administration sustainable, accountable and citizen-centric in the long-term.

Recommendations

- Undertake a whole of government digital approach which links to public values and is siloed across ministries and agencies; and
- Inclusive digital infrastructure Development Invest in digital infrastructure in order to reduce the digital divide particularly in marginalized and rural areas.
- Strengthen digital skills and capacity of public servants (with on-going digital skill training, reskilling and leadership development)
- Modernize correctional and legacy systems in order to make existing systems interoperable, and to allow for data sharing and scalability of digital public services.
- At that provide powerful system of cybersecurity and information protection to secure sensitive information and preserve trust of a population.
- Define a moral and regulatory framework of AI and data analytics, with transparency, responsibility as well as moral justice in automated decision-making.
- Encourage citizen-centric service design (user involvement in service design, user testing and evaluation of services).
- Pitch is for open government and transparency of data for increased accountability and civic participation.
- Follow a digital transformation model considering the difference in the institutional capacity of each country and socio-economic status.
- To monitor and evaluate digital initiatives on an ongoing basis using performance indicators coupled with an eye to efficiency, equity and creation of public value.

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