

Chapter 1

Public Services Digital Transformation With Competency Strategies and Future Perspectives

Nur Şat

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0317-1908>

Hitit University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Integrating new technologies in the public sector plays a crucial role in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes and requires targeted development strategies. While the COVID-19 pandemic and global recession have created uncertainty in the labor market, the digital transformation of public services has accelerated. This transformation reveals the growing importance of public officials' digital competencies, including technical skills and soft skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. This study examines the steps required for the public sector to adapt to the digital age and the demands of digital transformation. It also proposes creating competency frameworks to define and develop these essential skills. The research focuses on the following questions: Which digital competencies are essential for public officials? How can the public sector adapt to the demands of digital transformation? and How can competency frameworks enhance the effectiveness of public services?

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INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of public services has become a strategic necessity to enhance service quality, increase operational efficiency, and maximize citizen satisfaction. The rapid advancement of technology has compelled public institutions to restructure their processes and adapt to the digital age. However, this transformation is not limited to the renewal of technological infrastructure; it also encompasses the development of public employees' digital competencies.

This study adopts a qualitative approach, based on the descriptive analysis design. The study evaluates existing knowledge and practices related to digital transformation and competency development strategies in the public sector through a literature review and reports from international organizations. Reports from institutions such as the OECD, European Commission, UNESCO, and the World Economic Forum, along with academic studies, provide a general framework on various aspects of digital competencies and form the foundation of this research. Additionally, the practices of various countries are briefly referenced to offer a general perspective on digital competency development processes.

Digital transformation enables public services to become more transparent and accessible. Services delivered through digital platforms allow citizens to access the information and services they need more quickly, reducing processing times and ensuring more efficient use of public resources. Furthermore, the data generated through digitalization can contribute to the more effective design and implementation of public policies.

In an era of rapid digitalization, the effectiveness and efficiency of public services are directly related to the development of digital competencies of public officials. The experience of OECD countries suggests that this transformation process requires the development of both technical and soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. As the need for hybrid skill sets for public officials grows, fostering a culture of continuous learning and skills updating has become inevitable. The integration of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) presents new opportunities and challenges in public services. Leadership and management skills play a critical role in this process. Public officials should undergo comprehensive training programs to help them use these technologies ethically and effectively. Adapting digital competency development programs to the specific needs of the public sector and conducting them in cooperation with the private sector and educational institutions stand out as important steps toward improving the quality of public services. The success of these initiatives relies on integrating digital competencies into performance appraisal systems and incentivizing civil officials to continuously improve.

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