


Chapter 1


Digital Transformation and Change Management in the Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyzes the intersection between Digital Transformation (DT) and Change Management (CM) in the public sector, focusing on the Greek administrative context. It explores how five core CM variables – resistance, readiness, commitment, integration, and successful implementation – interact with digital reform initiatives. Drawing on theoretical models such as TAM, ADKAR, Diffusion of Innovations, and Institutional Theory, this chapter synthesizes fragmented literature to construct a cohesive analytical framework linking digital transformation with change management dynamics. The study addresses a conceptual gap by grounding digital reforms within established organizational and behavioral theories. Special emphasis is placed on Greece as a case study, situating its digital initiatives within broader international benchmarks and institutional trends.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, public administration systems worldwide have faced mounting pressures to become more transparent, agile, and citizen-oriented. These demands intensified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which served as a catalyst for unprecedented levels of digital adaptation across all levels of governance (Vial, 2021; Zaoui & Souissi, 2020). Far beyond a simple tech upgrade, digital transformation has emerged as a cornerstone of systemic reform, as governments confront major policy challenges; from climate adaptation to the overhaul of outdated fiscal systems (Pittaway & Montazemi, 2020; Liu et al., 2025).

Digital transformation in the public sector entails a multidimensional reconfiguration of administrative structures, organizational cultures, and work processes (Xanthopoulou, Antoniadis & Triantari, 2022). While often associated with technological innovations such as e-governance platforms or blockchain-based registries, DT is fundamentally about cultivating adaptive capacities, particularly leadership readiness, workforce mobilization, and institutional flexibility (Kyriakogkonas et al., 2023; Markellou, 2023). At its core, successful transformation depends on human and institutional engagement, not merely on the deployment of digital tools. Crucially, DT must be understood as an interconnected set of components, including: Technology Adoption; Process Reengineering; Organizational Culture Change; Data Governance; and User-Centered Service Design.

As Probojakti et al. (2025) emphasize, synergy between leadership, digital capacity, and organizational agility is vital for sustainable transformation across both public and private sectors. Within public administration, these elements manifest through four interrelated sub-dimensions: Digital Challenge Environment (external pressures such as pandemics, citizen demands, and EU mandates that trigger transformation); Investment Focus (strategic deployment of financial and technical resources, including EU RRF funding in Greece); Organizational Mobilization (leadership dynamics and civil servant participation that drive change); Sustaining Transformation (embedding reforms into institutional culture and routines to ensure continuity beyond political or funding cycles).

Yet, the success of transformation efforts depends heavily on how effectively the public sector manages change. In this context, Change Management (CM) acts as the structural core of reform. Particularly within government institutions, where entrenched bureaucracy and legacy systems are often dominant, CM must account for softer variables such as emotional readiness, cultural alignment, and organizational commitment (Belias et al., 2024; Haug, Dan & Mergel, 2024; Patergiannak & Pollalis, 2023). Despite growing interest in digital transformation within public administration, few studies have systematically examined how its core drivers intersect with change management dimensions in public sector contexts (Patergiannaki,

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