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Digital Transformation as a Modern Trend in the Development of Society within the Public Administration System of Territorial Communities in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

The article examines digital transformation as a modern trend shaping the development of society and its impact on public administration in the territorial communities of Ukraine. Digital transformation is considered a multidimensional process of institutional, organizational, and social changes that goes beyond the use of information and communication technologies and affects the logic of the activities of state authorities and local self-government bodies. The evolution from electronic governance to digital governance and the digital state highlights the growing importance of digital data, public expectations, and new forms of interaction between authorities and citizens. Decentralization has strengthened the role of territorial communities as active participants in management processes. Electronic governance, electronic services, and electronic democracy contribute to greater transparency, accountability, and citizen-oriented public administration. The effectiveness of digital transformation depends on institutional capacity, managerial competencies, and integration of digital tools into strategic planning. In the context of martial law, digital services, electronic registers, and communication platforms are critical for ensuring continuity of administrative processes, crisis resilience, and interaction with citizens, while challenges related to cybersecurity and uneven digital development remain. Digital transformation is increasingly a long-term social trend that determines directions for the modernization of state institutions and local governance. Future research should focus on the integration of digital governance into strategic management, strengthening cyber protection, and developing sustainable digital ecosystems during post-war recovery.



KEYWORDS

public administration, local self-government, digital society, territorial community, digitalization, local self-government bodies, digital governance.



Цифрова трансформація як сучасний тренд розвитку суспільства у системі публічного управління територіальних громад України

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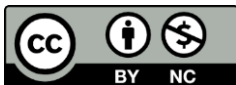
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Стаття досліджує цифрову трансформацію як сучасний тренд, що формує розвиток суспільства, та її вплив на публічне управління в територіальних громадах України. Цифрова трансформація розглядається як багатовимірний процес інституційних, організаційних та соціальних змін, що виходить за межі використання інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій та впливає на логіку діяльності державних і місцевих органів влади. Еволюція від електронного урядування до цифрового урядування та цифрової держави підкреслює зростання ролі цифрових даних, суспільних очікувань та нових форм взаємодії влади і громадян. Децентралізація посилює роль територіальних громад як активних учасників управління. Електронне урядування, електронні послуги та електронна демократія підвищують прозорість, підзвітність і орієнтованість на потреби населення. Ефективність цифрової трансформації залежить від інституційної спроможності, управлінських компетенцій та інтеграції цифрових інструментів у стратегічне планування. В умовах воєнного стану цифрові послуги, електронні реєстри та комунікаційні платформи є критично важливими для забезпечення безперервності процесів, кризової стійкості та взаємодії з громадянами, водночас залишаються виклики кібербезпеки та нерівномірної цифрової зрілості. Цифрова трансформація дедалі більше стає довгостроковим соціальним трендом, що визначає напрями модернізації державних установ та місцевого управління. Перспективи досліджень пов'язані з інтеграцією цифрового урядування, посиленням кіберзахисту та формуванням стійких цифрових екосистем у процесі післявоєнного відновлення.



КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

публічне управління, місцеве самоврядування, цифрове суспільство, територіальна громада, диджиталізація, органи місцевого самоврядування, цифрове врядування.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation at the present stage of development of society is becoming systemic and determines profound changes in the ways of organizing public administration, the functioning of local self-government bodies and the interaction of authorities with citizens. The formation of a digital society is accompanied by the active implementation of e-governance, digital governance, e-services and e-democracy mechanisms, which directly affects the institutional capacity of territorial communities and the quality of management decisions. At the same time, digitalization processes in the public sector are implemented in the context of decentralization, which leads to an increase in the responsibility of local governments for strategic development, provision of services and ensuring the sustainability of local management systems.

The issue of digital transformation of public administration is of particular relevance in the conditions of martial law in Ukraine, when territorial communities operate in an environment of increased security risks, cyber threats and crisis challenges. Ensuring cybersecurity, continuity of management processes and availability of electronic services is becoming a key prerequisite for maintaining crisis resilience at the local level. Under such circumstances, there is a growing need to understand the role of digital governance as a tool for adapting public administration to emergency conditions and at the same time as a factor in the long-term development of territorial communities.

The existing management practice shows the uneven implementation of digital solutions, fragmentation of regulatory and organizational support, as well as the limited use of adapted foreign experience in the field of e-governance and e-democracy. In connection with the above, a scientific problem arises of a comprehensive analysis of digital transformation as a modern trend in the development of society in the public administration of territorial communities of Ukraine, taking into account decentralization processes, security context and wartime challenges.

2. Literature Review

The digital transformation of public administration is not only the use of IT technologies, but a complex process of changes in the way public institutions function and provide public services, combining technological solutions with organizational, social and institutional transformations. In the context of modern public administration, digital transformation is seen as a phenomenon that develops from the stages of e-Government to broader concepts of digital governance (digital government) and the digital state. This evolution is thoroughly substantiated in the work of Eom and Lee, in which digital changes are seen as a response of public administration to the instability of the external environment and the growth of public demands for the efficiency, adaptability and accountability of state institutions [1]. This approach is also substantiated in the works of Lips, in which digital changes are considered as a process of mutual formation of technologies and institutions of the public sector, which requires adaptation of management practices, organizational structures and decision-making procedures [2].

In the article by Thomas proposed to consider the digital transformation of public administration as a holistic strategy for updating the activities of public authorities, which involves the introduction of digital technologies to improve the efficiency of management processes, the quality of public services and the level of interaction with citizens. The author focuses on the feasibility of using digital platforms, data analytics and automation of procedures, and also emphasizes the need to combine technological innovations with cybersecurity measures and ensuring digital inclusion as conditions for the sustainable development of the public sector [3].

In the context of understanding digital transformation as a modern trend in the development of society in the public administration system, the results of the study by Guenduez et al. are of great importance, demonstrating that digital changes in the public sector are becoming strategic and multidimensional [4]. The authors' identification of various strategies of digital innovations shows that digital transformation is not reduced to technical renewal, but acts as a tool for long-term institutional changes, optimization of management processes and the formation of a new logic for creating public value, which confirms the interpretation of digital transformation as a sustainable social trend that determines the directions of evolution of public administration and its adaptation to growing social expectations and the complexity of modern development.

In domestic scientific thought, the problems of digital transformation are gradually forming as an independent direction of research, covering economic, managerial and social aspects of the development of society. Ukrainian scholars consider digital changes primarily in the context of the transformation of economic relations, modernization of the public administration system, and rethinking the role of the state in the digital environment.

In the works of Andrushkiv, digital technologies are analyzed as a factor of structural changes in the national economy and society, combining the potential of innovative development with the risks of information oversaturation, increasing digital inequality and growing institutional vulnerability. Within the framework of these studies, the emphasis is placed on the controversial nature of digitalization and the need for its regulation by the state [5].

A significant layer of domestic research is devoted to the understanding of the digital economy as a basic environment for digital transformation. In the scientific works of Koliadenko, the digital economy is defined as a dominant characteristic of modern socio-economic development, which affects the change in forms of economic activity, economic categories and models of interaction of market subjects. The author's attention is focused on the absence of an established conceptual apparatus and the dynamism of digital processes, which complicates their unambiguous scientific interpretation [6].

The institutional conditions of digital transformation are the subject of research by Kraus and Kraus, who analyze the relationship between digital change, the quality of the institutional environment and innovative activity. The works of these authors emphasize the role of state policy, regulatory mechanisms and incentives in ensuring the effectiveness of digital transformation at the national level [7].

Within the framework of Ukrainian public administration, digital transformation is gradually turning into the main vector of modernization of the state and local self-government. In the article by Sorokina and Filatov [8], the digitalization of public administration in Ukraine is interpreted as a systemic change in the organizational principles of the activities of public authorities, which includes the use of digital technologies, open data and electronic services to increase the transparency and efficiency of public services. The authors emphasize that the digital society is shaping new standards for citizens' interaction with public authorities, which means that the content of public administration is changing both at the central and local levels, which is consistent with analytical reviews of international organizations, which emphasize the rapid growth of the digital maturity of the Ukrainian public sector, despite martial law and large-scale security challenges.

In the studies of Kuibida et al., digital governance in Ukraine is considered as a new conceptual framework for public administration, combining e-governance tools, open data, a service-oriented model of interaction with citizens and network formats of coordination between state authorities and local self-government [9]. In the works of these authors, digital governance is described as a stage where electronic services, registers, participation platforms and digital communication channels are integrated into an integral management system, in which the territorial community gradually moves from the role of a passive recipient of services to the status of a full partner of public authorities.

3. Problem Statement

The article is aimed at substantiating digital transformation as a modern trend in the development of society and analyzing its impact on the public administration of territorial communities of Ukraine in the context of decentralization and martial law.

4. Methods and Materials

The study uses a systemic and interdisciplinary approach to examine digital transformation in public administration of territorial communities in Ukraine. Methods include analysis of legal and strategic documents, literature review, and comparative analysis of domestic and international practices in digital governance and e-services. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to assess the level of digitalization, institutional capacity, and crisis resilience of territorial communities under decentralization and martial law.

This approach enables identification of key trends, challenges, and opportunities in digital transformation, considering technological, organizational, and social aspects of public administration.

5. Results and Discussion

The decentralization reform has led to a radical change in the institutional architecture of local self-government, associated with the redistribution of powers, financial resources and responsibilities at the level of territorial communities. Within the framework of the formed institutional framework, local self-government bodies received expanded opportunities to independently determine development priorities, plan socio-economic processes and organize the provision of public services. Under such conditions, digitalization is of particular importance as a tool for increasing managerial capacity, which ensures effective coordination of activities, transparency of management decisions and rational use of resources.

In the context of decentralization, digital technologies are integrated into the activities of local governments in order to improve administrative procedures, develop electronic services, strengthen analytical support for decision-making and expand the participation of residents in management processes. The use of digital tools contributes to the formation of sustainable management mechanisms that can adapt to dynamic socio-economic conditions, as well as to strengthen the institutional capacity of communities through improving the quality of planning, accountability and communication between government and society.

The practical results of digital transformation at the regional level in Ukraine are reflected in the measurement of the Digital Transformation Index of Regions for 2023, carried out by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. This index is used as a comprehensive tool for assessing the level of digital capacity of territories and the effectiveness of implementing digital solutions in the activities of public authorities. The methodology of the Index covers institutional capacity, development of digital infrastructure, accessibility of electronic public services, the level of digital skills of the population and the degree of digital transformation of local self-government bodies. According to the results of the assessment, the average value of the Index in Ukraine was 0.632 points, which indicates the progressive but uneven nature of digitalization, with a clearly expressed interregional differentiation [10].

The structural analysis of the Index showed that the highest indicators were achieved in the implementation of the “paperless” regime, the development of institutional capacity (in particular, through the formation of CDTO positions and digital teams), and the distribution of basic e-services. At the same time, the results revealed a number of limitations related to the staffing shortage of digital teams in certain regions, unequal development of digital infrastructure, and different levels of citizen involvement in the use of electronic services. The data obtained show that the digital transformation of Ukraine’s regions is gradually becoming systemic, but its further development requires increased coordination, institutional support and investment in human capital and digital competencies at the local level.

The level of development of e-governance and e-services in Ukraine is confirmed by international ratings. According to the UN E-Government Development Index, Ukraine ranked fifth in the world according to the Online Service Index as of 2024, demonstrating a jump from 102nd place in six years [11]. In the same study, Ukraine topped the E-Participation indicator, which reflects the level of citizen involvement in government processes through online platforms [12]. This result correlates with the scale of use of the Diia portal and application, which are used by tens of millions of citizens, including for registering a business, receiving social benefits, paperwork, and participating in consulting processes.

The development of e-democracy in Ukraine is gradually changing the nature of interaction between territorial communities, local self-government bodies and citizens, expanding the opportunities for public participation in public administration processes. The practice of functioning of electronic petitions introduced in accordance with the amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Citizens’ Appeals” shows an increase in the number of initiatives submitted by citizens at the local and national levels, at the same time a relatively small share of petitions that reach the established threshold of support is recorded. Such dynamics indicates the stage of formation of a culture of e-participation, the gradual accumulation of experience in civic interaction and the adaptation of local self-government institutions to new digital forms of communication. In scientific and normative-analytical materials, e-democracy is considered as a tool for the implementation of the constitutional rights of territorial communities to local self-government and as a factor in increasing trust in the authorities, subject to proper legal regulation, organizational capacity and technical support of electronic platforms [13].

However, martial law in Ukraine has exacerbated the problems of cybersecurity, the continuity of e-governance, and the crisis resilience of the public administration system. Kuchmenko's article on the digital transformation of public administration under martial law emphasizes that digital services, registers and platforms for interaction with citizens have become critical elements of the functioning of state institutions, as well as important tools for communication, coordination of actions and support of social cohesion [14]. Separate works by Ukrainian authors in the field of public administration and security analyze cybersecurity as a component of national security in the provision of electronic public services, focusing on the threats of cyberattacks, the protection of critical information infrastructure, and the need to form systemic cyber protection of authorities during martial law.

International organizations also record changes in Ukraine's status as a digital state. The World Bank's updated GovTech Maturity Index for 2025 places Ukraine in group A, which unites countries with the highest level of digital maturity in the public sector; the report emphasizes that Ukraine's indicators exceed the regional and global averages for all components of the index [15]. This fact is interpreted by experts as confirmation of the ability of Ukrainian institutions to support digital governance, e-services, and e-democracy tools even in the context of a full-scale war, which is directly related to the issue of crisis resilience of territorial communities and the state as a whole.

The adaptation of foreign experience in digital governance and digital transformation occupies a special place in the Ukrainian scientific and practical discourse. A number of publications on innovative strategies in public administration emphasize that the modernization of local administrations is based on the use of the best world practices, primarily the Estonian e-governance model, Scandinavian approaches to open data and citizen participation, as well as the experience of implementing digital services in EU countries. Separate studies are devoted to borrowing foreign experience of e-governance, taking into account Ukrainian realities, which emphasizes the need not to mechanically copy models, but to adapt taking into account the level of decentralization, resource capabilities of territorial communities, digital inequality, and the security context [16].

Thus, the Ukrainian experience of digital transformation of public administration demonstrates a complex intertwining of the processes of digitalization, decentralization, development of e-governance, e-services and e-democracy against the background of martial law, increased requirements for cybersecurity and the need to increase the crisis resilience of territorial communities. These processes form an empirical basis for further theoretical generalization of the role of digital society and digital governance in the evolution of public administration and local self-government in Ukraine.

In our opinion, digital transformation in the field of public administration in Ukraine at the present stage of development has acquired a systemic character and has gone beyond a narrow interpretation as a set of technological innovations. The corresponding process is increasingly manifesting itself as a stable social trend that affects the institutional logic of the functioning of state authorities and local self-government bodies, changes the nature of managerial interactions and rethinks the role of public authorities in the digital society. We believe that the consequence of digital transformation is the gradual formation of a new model of social development, within which the territorial community ceases to be considered exclusively as an object of managerial influence and increasingly acts as an active subject of public administration, involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of managerial decisions through the tools of e-governance and e-democracy.

In our opinion, the digitalization of public administration in the context of decentralization creates objective prerequisites for increasing the institutional capacity of territorial communities, in particular by optimizing management procedures, increasing the transparency of local self-government bodies and expanding citizens' access to electronic services. At the same time, it is legitimate to assert that the effectiveness of the relevant processes is not an automatic result of the introduction of digital technologies and largely depends on the managerial competencies of officials, the presence of a strategic vision of community development and the ability to integrate digital solutions into the system of local strategic planning and in the absence of an appropriate combination of digital tools with modern management practices, electronic services, participatory platforms and Information systems risk remaining formal elements of digital infrastructure without a significant impact on the quality of public administration.

It is likely that the further development of digital governance in Ukraine will take place in the direction of deepening interagency and inter-level integration, more active use of data as a strategic management resource and strengthening the service orientation of public authorities. In our opinion, this trend is of particular importance at the local level, since territorial communities are in direct contact

with the population and are the first to respond to the demands of the digital society regarding the accessibility, efficiency and transparency of management decisions.

In our opinion, the conditions of martial law in Ukraine have significantly transformed the priorities of the state digital policy, shifting the focus from convenience and efficiency to ensuring crisis resilience, continuity of management processes and cybersecurity. We believe that digital services, electronic registers, communication platforms between the authorities and citizens have become critical elements of the functioning of the public administration system, ensuring coordination of actions, access to services and maintaining managerial capacity in the face of extraordinary challenges. At the same time, the sufficiency of the existing cyber defense mechanisms at the level of individual territorial communities is questionable, especially given the limited financial, human and organizational resources, which increases the risks for the sustainability of digital management decisions.

The point of view of the authors of modern scientific research, which coincides with ours, is to recognize digital transformation as a long-term trend in the development of public administration, capable of changing the nature of interaction between the state, local self-government and society. We believe that the strategic task for the near future is the formation of an integral system of digital governance of territorial communities, within which e-governance, e-services and e-democracy mechanisms will function in a coordinated manner and contribute to increasing transparency, trust and resilience of public authorities in Ukraine.

6. Conclusions

As a result of the analysis, it has been established that the digital transformation of public administration at the present stage of development is a complex, multidimensional and dynamic process that goes beyond the introduction of individual information and communication technologies and covers deep institutional, organizational and social changes. Digital transformations are gradually forming a new logic for the functioning of state institutions and local self-government bodies, changing the nature of interaction between the authorities, territorial communities and citizens in the direction of greater openness, accountability and service orientation.

It is proved that the evolution of digital transformation in public administration from the stages of e-governance to the concepts of digital governance and digital state reflects the growing dependence of management models on public expectations and digital practices. Within the digital society, the territorial community is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of an active public administration entity involved in the formation of managerial decisions through the tools of electronic services and e-democracy, which confirms the transformation of traditional ideas about the role of citizens in the system of public power.

It is substantiated that digitalization in the context of decentralization creates significant prerequisites for increasing the institutional capacity of local self-government bodies, but the effectiveness of the relevant processes largely depends on the level of managerial competencies, strategic vision of the development of territorial communities and the ability to integrate digital tools into the system of local strategic planning. In the absence of such a combination, digital solutions risk maintaining a formal character and not providing a systemic improvement in the quality of public administration.

It has been established that the conditions of martial law in Ukraine have significantly affected the priorities of digital policy, actualizing the issues of crisis resilience, continuity of management processes and cybersecurity. Digital services, electronic registers and communication channels have become critical elements of the functioning of public authorities, at the same time revealing structural limitations at the level of individual territorial communities associated with resource scarcity and uneven digital maturity. This emphasizes the need for state coordination, standardization of digital solutions and the development of intermunicipal cooperation.

The analysis of foreign experience shows that the effectiveness of digital governance directly depends on the quality of the institutional environment and the ability to adapt external models to national and local conditions. In the domestic context, priority is not the mechanical borrowing of successful practices, but their regulatory, organizational and functional adaptation, taking into account decentralization, martial law and the specifics of the development of territorial communities.

Prospects for further research are related to an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms for integrating digital governance into the strategic management of the development of territorial

communities, assessing the impact of e-democracy on the quality of management decisions and the level of public trust, as well as the study of institutional models of cybersecurity at the local level. The issue of overcoming digital inequality between communities and the formation of sustainable digital ecosystems of public administration in the context of Ukraine's post-war recovery requires a separate scientific study.

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