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PROSPECTS FOR THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

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Abstract: This article examines the theoretical and practical aspects of the digital transformation of local government authorities. It analyzes the legal framework and reforms implemented in Uzbekistan to digitalize public administration, as well as their outcomes. Furthermore, based on the experiences of Kazakhstan, Estonia, Finland, and Germany, the study identifies priority directions for the digital transformation of local governance. The findings demonstrate that the widespread adoption of digital technologies in local government contributes to improving the efficiency of public services, ensuring transparency, and enhancing citizen participation.

Keywords: digital transformation, local government, e-government, E-Qaror, digital public administration, artificial intelligence, Big Data, public services.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические и практические аспекты цифровой трансформации органов местной государственной власти. Проанализированы правовая база и реформы, реализуемые в Узбекистане в сфере цифровизации государственного управления, а также их результаты. Кроме того, на основе опыта Казахстана, Эстонии, Финляндии и Германии определены приоритетные направления цифровой трансформации местного управления. Результаты исследования показывают, что широкое внедрение цифровых технологий в деятельность органов местной государственной власти способствует повышению эффективности государственных услуг, обеспечению прозрачности и расширению участия граждан.

Ключевые слова: цифровая трансформация, органы местной государственной власти, электронное правительство, **E-Qaror**, цифровое государственное управление, искусственный интеллект, Big Data, государственные услуги.

INTRODUCTION

Global digitalization is fundamentally transforming public administration systems. Today, digital technologies have become one of the key factors in improving the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of public services. The United Nations E-Government Development Index confirms that countries successfully implementing digital governance achieve higher levels of citizen satisfaction.

Uzbekistan has also elevated the modernization and digitalization of public administration to the level of state policy. In particular, the digital transformation of local government authorities aims to improve administrative efficiency, strengthen communication with citizens, and simplify the delivery of public services.

Local government authorities represent the closest level of government to the population. Therefore, their digital transformation directly affects the quality and speed of public service delivery. Within the framework of the New Uzbekistan reforms, the digitalization of public administration and the reduction of bureaucratic procedures make this research highly relevant.

The objective of this study is to analyze the digital transformation processes of local government authorities in Uzbekistan, examine the experiences of Central Asian and European countries, and develop recommendations for further improvement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

The digital transformation of local government has become one of the key research areas in public administration modernization. International scholars have extensively studied electronic government, digital governance, digital public services, and smart city concepts.

David Osborne and Ted Gaebler developed theoretical foundations for public sector modernization, while Jan van Dijk and Manuel Castells examined the impact of digital technologies on public administration efficiency.

International organizations, including the United Nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank, have produced numerous analytical reports and policy recommendations concerning digital government. These studies emphasize transparency, accessibility, citizen-centered services, and improved governance effectiveness.

In Uzbekistan, researchers have also examined digital government, e-government systems, ICT implementation in public administration, digital economy, electronic public services, innovative governance approaches, and regional digitalization.

Nevertheless, most existing studies focus on general issues of e-government, whereas organizational and economic mechanisms of local government digital transformation, digital platform efficiency, data-driven decision-making, and the application of artificial intelligence in territorial governance remain insufficiently explored.

Accordingly, investigating contemporary trends, international best practices, and national experiences in the digital transformation of local government authorities constitutes the scientific relevance of this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employs comparative analysis, a systems approach, institutional analysis, examination of legal and regulatory documents, and statistical data analysis.

Digital transformation in public institutions refers to the comprehensive modernization of governance through the extensive implementation of information and communication technologies. This process includes:

- digitalization of public services;
- implementation of electronic document management systems;
- application of Big Data technologies;
- AI-assisted decision-making systems;
- development of Smart City initiatives;
- establishment of open data platforms.

The Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DP-6079[1] dated October 5, 2020 “On approval of the Strategy “Digital Uzbekistan-2030” and measures for its effective implementation”, approving the “Digital Uzbekistan–2030” Strategy, marked a significant milestone in the country’s digital transformation agenda.

The Strategy outlines the following priorities:

- digitalization of public services;
- integration of government databases;
- expansion of e-government services;
- development of digital infrastructure;
- introduction of data-driven decision-making systems in public administration.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The legal basis for digital governance in Uzbekistan is established through several regulatory acts.

The Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DP-6079[2] dated October 5, 2020 “On approval of the Strategy “Digital Uzbekistan-2030” and measures for its effective implementation”, defines the key priorities for digital public administration, including the integration of government information systems, digitalization of public services, and development of regional digital infrastructure.

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DP-60[3] of January 28, 2022 “On the Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan for 2022 — 2026”, approving the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan, sets the goal of delivering at least 90 percent of public services electronically while expanding the use of digital technologies and reducing bureaucratic procedures.

1 https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7008256
2 https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7008256
3 https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6968143

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. RP-162[4] of Aprel 19, 2024 “On additional measures to reduce state participation in the economy”, introduced additional measures aimed at implementing digital technologies in public administration, integrating government databases, and expanding the use of digital platforms across government agencies.

Moreover, several resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers have strengthened the institutional framework for electronic document management, interagency digital cooperation, and the digitalization of public services at the local level.

In recent years, significant progress has been achieved in the digital transformation of local government authorities.

The implementation of the E-Qaror (E-Decision) system has automated the preparation, coordination, approval, and publication of decisions adopted by local authorities. This has significantly reduced decision-making time while increasing transparency.

The Unified Interactive Public Services Portal has continuously expanded the range of electronic services available to citizens and businesses, reducing both administrative costs and the need for physical visits to government offices.

Citizens have increasingly participated in the allocation of local budget resources, thereby strengthening public oversight of government activities.

The introduction of electronic document management systems in local administrations has enhanced administrative efficiency and substantially reduced paperwork.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: CENTRAL ASIA AND EUROPE

Kazakhstan is one of the leading countries in Central Asia in developing e-government services. Through the eGov.kz platform, citizens can access a wide range of government services remotely. Local executive authorities actively utilize electronic document management, online budget monitoring, and digital citizen engagement platforms.

The Smart Astana initiative represents a successful example of applying digital technologies in urban governance.

Kyrgyzstan has also implemented several digital government initiatives, including electronic identification systems, digital documents, and unified information systems for local governments. However, insufficient digital infrastructure and limited digital skills continue to slow the pace of digital transformation.

Estonia is recognized as one of the world’s most digitally advanced countries. Through the X-Road data exchange platform, government agencies securely exchange information. Local governments provide the majority of public services entirely online.

Estonia’s experience in digital identification, electronic voting, and integrated government databases is widely regarded as an international best practice.

Finnish local governments maintain continuous communication with citizens through digital platforms. Municipalities actively employ artificial intelligence, digital budgeting systems, and online public services.

Electronic consultations and online public discussions enable citizens to participate directly in decision-making processes.

Germany’s public administration digitalization is being implemented under the Online Access Act (Onlinezugangsgesetz – OZG), which aims to integrate federal, state, and municipal public services into a unified digital ecosystem.

Municipal governments widely use digital building permits, electronic registries, and digital service centers.

The research contributes by:

- improving the institutional model for the digital transformation of local government authorities;
- conducting a comparative analysis of digital governance practices in Uzbekistan and European countries;
- developing scientific recommendations for implementing artificial intelligence and Big Data technologies in local governance.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The ongoing digital transformation of local government authorities in Uzbekistan significantly contributes to improving the efficiency, transparency, and openness of public administration. The experiences of Central Asian and European countries demonstrate the important role of digital technologies in modernizing local governance systems.

4 https://www.lex.uz/uz/docs/7569029

The broader application of artificial intelligence, Big Data, and digital platforms is expected to elevate local public administration to a new level of effectiveness.

The study recommends:

1. Establishing digital decision-making centers within local government administrations.
2. Introducing AI-based forecasting systems for regional socio-economic challenges.
3. Integrating government databases into a unified digital platform.
4. Strengthening digital monitoring mechanisms for local budget management.
5. Expanding digital citizen participation platforms.
6. Implementing advanced cybersecurity standards across local government institutions.

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