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DEVELOPING DIGITAL CAPACITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND CITIZENS MEETING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION REQUIREMENTS IN VIETNAM

DESENVOLVIMENTO DA CAPACIDADE DIGITAL DE FUNCIONÁRIOS PÚBLICOS E CIDADÃOS ATENDENDO AOS REQUISITOS DA TRANSFORMAÇÃO DIGITAL NO VIETNÃ

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Abstract
Digital technology development and digital transformation are inevitable trends, which have a direct impact on social development management. For the state, the digital governance model is established when implementing digital transformation; Public affairs activities are deployed on digital platforms, moving from the real environment to the digital environment. Digital transformation has formed and developed a digital government aimed at serving the people, meeting people's requests more quickly, accurately and effectively; but also poses requirements on the digital capabilities of subjects participating in state governance - civil servants and citizens. This study builds a theoretical framework on digital transformation and digital capacity requirements of civil servants and citizens to meet the requirements of digital transformation in state administration. The theoretical model includes 02 scales/independent variables "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) and 01 scale/dependent variable "Digital transformation" (DTS). The author surveyed the opinions of 450 commune-level local government leaders of 3 provinces, including Quang Ninh province (Northern region), Quang

Resumo
O desenvolvimento da tecnologia digital e a transformação digital são tendências inevitáveis, que têm um impacto direto na gestão do desenvolvimento social. Para o Estado, o modelo de governança digital é estabelecido durante a implementação da transformação digital; as atividades de assuntos públicos são realizadas em plataformas digitais, passando do ambiente físico para o ambiente digital. A transformação digital formou e desenvolveu um governo digital voltado para o atendimento à população, atendendo às solicitações das pessoas de forma mais rápida, precisa e eficaz; mas também impõe exigências quanto às capacidades digitais dos sujeitos que participam da governança estatal — servidores públicos e cidadãos. Este estudo constrói um marco teórico sobre a transformação digital e os requisitos de capacidade digital de servidores públicos e cidadãos para atender às exigências da transformação digital na administração pública. O modelo teórico inclui 02 escalas/variáveis independentes "Desenvolvimento da capacidade digital dos servidores públicos" (CCS), "Desenvolvimento da capacidade digital dos cidadãos" (CCZ) e 01 escala/variável dependente "Transformação digital" (DTS). O autor realizou uma pesquisa com 450 líderes do

Tri province (Central region), Vinh Long province (Southern region). The survey aimed to collect empirical information about the digital capacity of civil servants, the digital capacity of the people and the level of impact on digital transformation goals in state governance. From the conclusion of this empirical research, the author implies the issue of digital human resource development policy in Vietnam.

Keywords: Digital Transformation. Digital Capacity of Civil Servants. Digital Capacity of Citizens. Vietnam.

governo local em nível de município de 3 províncias, incluindo a província de Quang Ninh (região Norte), a província de Quang Tri (região Central) e a província de Vinh Long (região Sul). A pesquisa teve como objetivo coletar informações empíricas sobre a capacidade digital dos servidores públicos, a capacidade digital da população e o nível de impacto nas metas de transformação digital na governança estatal. A partir da conclusão desta pesquisa empírica, o autor aborda a questão da política de desenvolvimento de recursos humanos digitais no Vietnã.

Palavras-chave: *Transformação Digital. Capacidade Digital dos Servidores Públicos. Capacidade Digital dos Cidadãos. Vietnã.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Vietnam participates in the 4th industrial revolution (revolution 4.0) with a proactive and positive spirit to adapt to the rapid development of digital technology. In 2019, the national digital transformation policy was officially identified in the political document of the Communist Party of Vietnam with a focus on developing the digital economy, building smart cities, e-government, and moving towards digital government (CPV, 2019).

In 2020, the Vietnamese Government's policy on digital transformation was developed and implemented to change the way state governance, building and operating digital government serve the people better. The national digital transformation program issued in 2020 has identified the goals of developing digital government, developing digital economy, developing digital society, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of state management, improving the competitiveness of the economy, and narrowing the digital gap (PM, 2020).

The promulgation and implementation of the above guidelines and policies have achieved positive results, putting Vietnam on the list of countries with rapid adaptation to technology (CPV, 2024); Promote state governance in a modern direction based on the application of digital technology and streamlining the local government apparatus: Establish a 2-level local government model by 2025, including provincial and commune

levels; abolish the previous 3-level local government model (provincial level, district level, commune level) (CPV, 2025).

Digital transformation and streamlining the government apparatus have also increased pressure on local civil servants in the process of performing public duties; increasing pressure on people when participating in state governance in the digital environment. This places new demands on digital capabilities for both civil servants and citizens; attracts the attention of managers, researchers, and is also the reason for the author's interest in this study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital transformation is not simply a technology project, but a strategic change for organizations. It is the process of comprehensively changing the organization's operating methods, governance and culture based on digital technology (AI, IoT, Cloud, Big Data) to improve performance, experience and create new value. This is an inevitable trend in the 4.0 revolution, focusing on 3 pillars/aspects: digital government, digital economy and digital society. PN (2025) broadly explains these three aspects, that digital government thanks to digital data and digital technology understands people better, therefore, provides better digital services and takes better care of people; The digital economy allows each person to quickly access the entire market in an unprecedented way; and the digital society helps erase geographical gaps, providing equal opportunities for people to access services, bringing a series of great advances in quality of life.

In terms of state governance, according to MIC (2021) and Hung, D.V. (2022), digital transformation creates new value: Organizational and operating models based on digital platforms, technology integration, exploiting big data in digital form for the best state governance; Digital culture is formed in state governance and social activities. Phong, V. (2025) emphasized that digital transformation has created a digital government model, which is the key to turning current challenges into sustainable development opportunities for localities; Helping people have equal access to services, training, and knowledge, thereby helping to narrow the digital gap through the development of digital government, digital economy, and digital society. The above studies have generalized the goals of digital transformation in state administration expressed in key contents: Digital

government is established, state governance is carried out safely in the digital environment; Digital economy and digital society are formed, allowing people to conveniently participate in state governance and economic and social activities in the digital environment; Digital culture is formed, interactions and transactions of civil servants and people are carried out more and more easily online, in the digital environment.

In essence, digital transformation in state administration is the application of digital technology to change the management and operation methods of state organizations; The performance of public duties by civil servants and the interaction of people with the government are carried out in the digital environment. Civil servants and citizens are subjects participating in state governance in the digital environment, so the requirement of digital capacity for them is necessary; and developing digital capacity of civil servants and citizens is a task and solution for developing digital human resources that is decisive in the process of achieving digital transformation goals.

- Firstly, developing digital capacity of civil servants is the first task and solution to form digital civil servants, realizing the goal of digital transformation in state governance. According to Chen, L. et al. (2024) and Hoan, D.M. (2024), developing digital capacity of civil servants is carried out through training/encouraging policy measures to equip and update digital knowledge and skills to form working capacity and ability to transact in the digital environment. Sharing this view, but Que, N.D. et al. (2022) and Bau, D.N. (2025) further emphasizes the active subject factor, that civil servants must regularly train, equip, and update digital knowledge and skills to always be digital human resources to meet state governance requirements in the context of digital transformation; At the same time, state agencies need to develop digital competency criteria to evaluate the quality of civil servants. The above studies interpret the content expressing the connotation of developing digital capacity of civil servants, that: Civil servants are trained, equipped, and updated with digital knowledge and skills to meet title standards and state administration requirements in the context of digital transformation; Civil servants proactively train, equip, and update digital knowledge and skills to maintain and develop digital capabilities to meet state governance requirements in the context of digital transformation; Civil servants

carry out professional work and transactions, guide people to process information and digital data proficiently, be objectively assessed for digital capacity and become digital human resources to meet state governance requirements in the context of digital transformation.

- Second, developing digital capacity of citizens is a necessary task and solution to develop a digital society and realize the goal of digital transformation. According to Nga, Q. (2023) and Hoa, L.Q. et al. (2023), one of the challenges in digital transformation is developing digital human resources; Accordingly, developing people's digital capacity is a necessary factor for people to participate in local state governance in the digital environment. Thang, C. (2024) and Nguyen, T. (2025) emphasize developing people's digital capabilities through policies to build and implement a digital capacity framework for people, which is a solution to improve people's digital transformation skills, economic and social development; At the same time, it is an important foundation for successfully implementing national digital transformation; Accordingly, people are trained, equipped, and updated with skills to use and exploit technology and data safely, responsibly and effectively, helping them improve their quality of life, create economic value and master technology. The above studies interpret the content to express the connotation of developing digital capacity of citizens, that: Citizens are disseminated digital knowledge and digital skills to become digital human resources and develop a local digital society; Citizens are disseminated digital knowledge and digital skills, becoming active subjects in implementing digital transformation goals locally; Citizens are equipped and updated with digital knowledge and skills to transact in the digital environment when participating in local state governance processes.

It can be seen that many recent studies have clearly pointed out the characteristics and goals of digital transformation in state administration and the requirements for digital capacity of civil servants and digital capacity of citizens. The author synthesizes, inherits and develops the above research content to build a theoretical framework, shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Theoretical framework

Research content	Related researchs	Developing research scales
1. Developing digital capacity of civil servants (CCS)		
- Training/self-training to equip and update digital knowledge and skills for civil servants to develop working capacity and ability to transact in the digital environment. - Assessing the quality of civil servants according to digital competency criteria.	Que, N.D. et al. (2022); Chen, L. et al. (2024); Hoan, D.M. (2024); Bau, D.N. (2025).	1. CCS1. Civil servants are trained, equipped, and updated with digital knowledge and skills to meet title standards and state administration requirements in the context of digital transformation. 2. CCS2. Civil servants proactively train, equip, and update digital knowledge and skills to maintain and develop digital capabilities to meet state governance requirements in the context of digital transformation. 3. CCS3. Civil servants carry out professional work and transactions, guide people to process information and digital data proficiently, be objectively assessed for digital capacity and become digital human resources to meet state governance requirements in the context of digital transformation.
2. Developing digital capacity of citizens (CCZ)		
- Building a digital capacity framework for citizens. - Train, equip and update skills to use and exploit technology and data safely, responsibly and effectively.	Nga, Q. (2023); Hoa, L.Q. et al. (2023); Thang, C. (2024); Nguyen, T. (2025).	4. CCZ1. Citizens are disseminated digital knowledge and digital skills to become digital human resources and develop a local digital society. 5. CCZ2. Citizens are disseminated digital knowledge and digital skills, becoming active subjects in implementing digital transformation goals locally. 6. CCZ3. Citizens are equipped and updated with digital knowledge and skills to transact in the digital environment when participating in local state governance processes.
3. Digital transformation (DTS)		
Organize and operate based on digital platforms, integrate technology, exploit big data in digital form to best govern state.	MIC (2021); Hung, D.V. (2022); PN (2025); Phong, V. (2025).	7. DTS1. Digital government is established, state governance is carried out safely in the digital environment. 8. DTS2. Digital economy and digital society are formed, allowing people to conveniently participate in state governance and economic and social activities in the digital environment. 9. DTS3. Digital culture is formed, interactions and transactions of civil servants and people are carried out more and more easily online, in the digital environment.

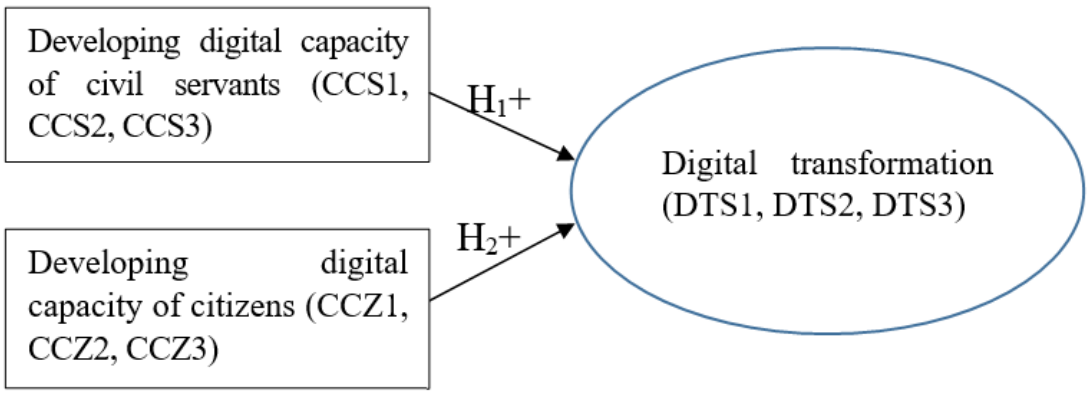
Source: Compiled by the author through the review

From the above theoretical framework (Table 1), this research model is designed to include 02 independent scales/variables "Developing digital capacity of civil servants"

(CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) and 01 independent scale/variable "Digital transformation" (DTS) [Figure 1].

Figure 1

Research model



The above research model includes 3 scales, 9 observed variables, designed into 9 questions in the survey and measured using a 5-level Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No opinion; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1). The author surveys, analyzes data and concludes empirical research in Vietnam with the hypothesis: Developing digital capacity of civil servants (H1), Developing digital capacity of citizens (H2) positively and directly affects Digital transformation in state governance.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the author combined the use of qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve the identified research objectives. Qualitative methods are implemented through collecting and analyzing secondary data to build a theoretical framework and research model. Quantitative methods are carried out through surveys to collect and analyze primary data and draw empirical research conclusions.

In quantitative research using exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis techniques, the minimum sample size needed is N = 5*m (m is the total number of observed variables) [Hair, J.F. et al., 2009]. This study is designed with a model of 3 scales and 9 observed variables, so the minimum sample size needed is N = 9*5 = 45.

In fact, the author surveyed a sample size of 450 commune-level local government leaders of 3 provinces, including Quang Ninh province (Northern region), Quang Tri province (Central region), and Vinh Long province (Southern region). The survey form was distributed based on the preliminary interview and consent of the respondent; The result was 450/450 valid votes, achieving a 100% response rate.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, the author tests the reliability of the scales and observed variables in the research model to serve as a basis for further analysis. According to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the scale and observed variables are reliable when they meet the standard conditions: Cronbach'alpha > 0.6; Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3. The test results show that all 3 scales and 9 observed variables are reliable when meeting the above standard conditions (Table 2).

Table 2

Statistical results and testing results of the scale

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Developing digital capacity of civil servants (CCS)	CCS1 CCS2 CCS3	450 450 450	1 1 1	5 5 5	4.11 4.13 4.08	.691 .688 .712	.722	CCS1 = .618 CCS2 = .624 CCS3 = .595
2. Developing digital capacity of citizens (CCZ)	CCZ1 CCZ2 CCZ3	450 450 450	1 1 1	5 5 5	4.04 4.05 3.98	.684 .696 .652	.681	CCZ1 = .493 CCZ2 = .534 CCZ3 = .522
3. Digital transformation (DTS)	DTS1 DTS2 DTS3	450 450 450	1 1 1	5 5 5	4.10 4.12 4.06	.694 .705 .689	.701	DTS1 = .612 DTS2 = .559 DTS3 = .606
Valid N (listwise)		450						

Source: Author's survey results

Data in Table 2 shows that the observations of the scales "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ), "Digital transformation" (DTS) are all rated at an average level of Mean ≥ 3.98, statistically significant according to the Likert scale (1-5). Evaluation opinions are focused, contributing to affirming that the national digital transformation program in Vietnam is deployed synchronously, digital government is established, state governance is implemented safely in the digital environment; Digital economy and digital society are formed, allowing people to conveniently participate in state governance and economic and social activities in the digital environment; Digital culture is formed, interactions and transactions of civil servants and people are carried out more and more easily online, in the digital environment.

There is a certain difference in the observed values of the scales. In particular, the observed variables of the scale "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) are evaluated at the lowest average value: Mean (CCZ1) = 4.04, Mean (CCZ2) = 4.05, Mean (CCZ3) = 3.98, contributing to affirming that civil servants and local people are disseminated and equipped with digital knowledge and skills and have the necessary digital capacity to participate in the digital society and digital state governance. However, the issue of developing digital capacity of citizens has not yet met expectations; that many people still do not transact and interact fluently and effectively in the digital environment when participating in local state governance; have not become active subjects in implementing digital transformation goals locally as they still have limited digital capabilities.

The above issue has a direct impact on the national digital transformation goal and directly affects the effectiveness of local state governance. Because civil servants and people are the subjects participating in local state governance in the digital environment; When both civil servants and people are proficient in transactions in the digital environment, local state governance processes can be carried out quickly, accurately, and effectively. Therefore, there is a need for appropriate and effective solutions for developing digital capacity of local citizens in Vietnam.

With the standard test value, all 3 scales and 9 observed variables in the model continue to be used to perform further analysis. The author analyzed exploratory factors with Varimax rotation to preliminarily evaluate the unidimensionality, convergent

validity, and discriminant validity of the scales and test the suitability of the theoretical model (Table 3, Table 4).

Table 3

Total Variance Explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.731
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4184.238
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.406	37.844	37.844	3.406	37.844	37.844	3.182	35.351	35.351
2	3.094	34.381	72.225	3.094	34.381	72.225	2.969	32.990	68.341
3	1.132	12.580	84.805	1.132	12.580	84.805	1.482	16.464	84.805
4	.511	5.676	90.481						
5	.468	5.203	95.684						
6	.149	1.656	97.340						
7	.123	1.365	98.705						
8	.081	.903	99.608						
9	.035	.392	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Author's survey results

Table 4

Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

Scales	Observed variables	Component 1	2	3
1. Developing digital capacity of civil servants (CCS)	CCS1	.865		
	CCS2	.767		
	CCS3	.833		
2. Developing digital capacity of citizens (CCZ)	CCZ1		.833	
	CCZ2		.845	
	CCZ3		.857	
3. Digital transformation (DTS)	DTS1			.840
	DTS2			.873
	DTS3			.877

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Source: Author's survey results

Data Table 3 and Table 4 show:

- + KMO = 0.731 > 0.5, confirming that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set; The Bartlett test has an observed significance level Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, showing that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor; Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = 84.805% > 50%, showing that 84.805% of the variation of representative factors is explained by observed variables (Table 3). All observed variables have Factor Loading > 0.5 (Table 4), showing that the observed variables have good statistical significance.
- + Initial Eigenvalues has a breakpoint at 3 factors with Eigenvalues > 1 (Table 3), showing that the observed variables are extracted into 03 factors corresponding to the 03 initial factors. Thus, the original research model is maintained and is scientifically appropriate; Confirms the suitability of the theoretical model for research on digital transformation, digital capacity of civil servants, digital capacity of citizens, with 3 scales and 9 observed variables as built.

With the results of the above exploratory factor analysis, all 3 scales and 9 observed variables have good reliability and statistical significance. Continue to perform multivariate regression analysis to consider the relationship of the scales in the research model: 02 independent scales/variables "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) and 01 dependent scale/variable "Digital transformation" (DTS).

Table 5

Multivariate regression results

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta		ig.	IF
	(Constant)	.093	.236		2.346	000	
	1. Developing digital capacity of civil servants (CCS)	518	.369	.501	1.434	000	.811
	2. Developing digital capacity of citizens (CCZ)	433	.311	.378	0.347	000	.874
a. Dependent Variable: Digital transformation (DTS) R^2 = 0.758; Durbin-Watson = 2.025							

Source: Author's survey results

The survey data in Table 5 shows:

- + R^2 = 0.758, confirming that the scales "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) explain 75.8% of the variation of the scale "Digital transformation" (DTS); VIF = 1.811 and VIF = 1.874 (1 < VIF < 2), showing that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.025 (1 < d < 3), showing that the regression model has no autocorrelation phenomenon, confirming that the scales "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) are independent and have the same impact on the scale "Digital transformation" (DTS), confirming the suitability of the theoretical research model with the survey data set.
- + The regression coefficients of the two independent variables "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) are both statistically significant Sig. = 0.000 (Sig. < 0.05) and has a positive value: B(CCS) = 0.521 and B(CCZ) = 0.464, confirming the positive relationship between 2 independent variables "Developing digital capacity of civil servants" (CCS), "Developing digital capacity of citizens" (CCZ) and 01 dependent variable "Digital transformation" (DTS); Hypotheses H1, H2 are accepted; The original research model continues to be confirmed as appropriate.

From Table 5 data, the regression model of this study is determined: DTS = 1.093 + 0.518*CCS + 0.433*CCZ. The degree of correlation of the independent and dependent variables in descending order is: “Developing digital capacity of civil servants” (CCS), “Developing digital capacity of citizens” (CCZ). From here, the author has a basis to conclude empirical research in Vietnam on digital transformation and developing digital capacity of civil servants, developing digital capacity of citizens:

- Firstly, the national digital transformation program in Vietnam is deployed synchronously, digital government is established, state governance is implemented safely in the digital environment; Digital economy and digital society are formed, allowing people to conveniently participate in state governance and economic and social activities in the digital environment; Digital

culture is formed, interactions and transactions of civil servants and people are carried out more and more easily online, in the digital environment.

- Second, civil servants and local people are disseminated and equipped with digital knowledge and skills and have the necessary digital capabilities to participate in the digital society and digital state governance. However, the issue of developing people's digital capabilities has not yet met expectations; that many people still do not transact and interact fluently and effectively in the digital environment when participating in local state governance; have not become active subjects in implementing digital transformation goals in the locality as they still have limited digital capacity.

Civil servants and citizens are the subjects participating in local state governance in the digital environment. Therefore, when both civil servants and people are proficient in transactions in the digital environment, local state governance processes can be carried out quickly, accurately, and effectively. Therefore, there is a need for appropriate and effective solutions for developing digital capacity of local citizens in Vietnam today. In this study, the author suggests solutions: (1) Localities strengthen coordination between the government and the community to propagate and disseminate digital knowledge and skills, ensuring fair and comprehensive access to digital technology for all people; (2) Localities deploy thematic digital knowledge and skills training programs for each specific field, helping people easily access information and conveniently participate in state governance processes in each field.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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