Digital Platform Governance in Public Sector Organizations: A Systematic Literature Review of Emerging Trends

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ABSTRACT

Digital platforms are reshaping how public organizations coordinate services, exchange information, and engage with citizens and external providers. Their governance raises questions about the allocation of authority, institutional accountability, and the distribution of public benefits. This systematic literature review examines these questions through platform ecosystem and public value perspectives. The analysis draws on a selected amount of 19 publications, comprising 14 sources published between 2021 and 2026 and five earlier contributions. The review organizes the literature around four themes: the governance implications of artificial intelligence, blockchain, cloud infrastructure, and data analytics; public agencies' roles in platform ecosystems; ethical and regulatory risks; and participation and public value. Across these themes, the literature highlights tensions between architectural control and stakeholder autonomy, service coordination and distributed responsibility, and digital access and meaningful participation. Government-as-a-Service is considered as one proposed service-delivery configuration within this literature; the selected evidence does not establish its prevalence across public administrations. Building on existing accounts of public agencies as platform builders, catalysts, and partners, the review proposes an integrative framework connecting technological arrangements, governance mechanisms, and public-value considerations. Its central argument is that the implications of platform adoption depend on how decision rights, accountability arrangements, and opportunities for participation are organized within institutional settings. The contribution is conceptual: it clarifies relationships and questions for further investigation rather than demonstrating causal effects or a universal transition toward decentralized governance. The review's selected and heterogeneous evidence base limits generalization. Future research should examine how governance arrangements operate over time and how their consequences vary across organizational, technological, and institutional contexts.

Keywords: Digital Platform Governance, Public Sector Organizations, Platform Ecosystem, Digital Transformation, Public Value

INTRODUCTION

The rapid acceleration of digital transformation has fundamentally altered the structural fabric of public administration, transitioning it from traditional bureaucratic models to agile, platform-based architectures. Digital platform governance has emerged as a critical mechanism for public sector organizations to navigate the complexities of modern service delivery and societal turbulence (Ansell et al., 2025; Skiftenes Flak et al., 2025). As governments increasingly act as platform builders, catalysts, or decentralized partners, the integration of disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and big data analytics has become a cornerstone for enhancing transparency and adaptability (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026; Tan, 2023). Consequently, understanding how these platforms are governed is no longer merely a technical concern but a strategic necessity for ensuring the resilience and legitimacy of the state in a digital era.

At its core, digital platform governance in the public sector refers to the frameworks, rules, and socio-technical arrangements that manage the interactions between government agencies, citizens, and private stakeholders within a shared digital ecosystem. Unlike localized IT management, this concept encompasses a shift toward "Government-as-a-Service" (GaaS), where cloud-based infrastructures and data-driven systems facilitate seamless service delivery and innovation (Orgeron et al., 2025). This governance involves the orchestration of complex ecosystems, moving beyond internal institutional boundaries to include multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships and globalized, multi-domain frameworks (Chung et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2024). It is defined by the tension between maintaining centralized oversight and fostering the openness required for collaborative innovation (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026).

Despite the growing body of literature on platformization, significant research gaps remain regarding the long-term sustainability and ethical accountability of these governance models. Current scholarship often focuses on the technical efficiency of AI and blockchain integration while overlooking the "accountability dilemmas" and regulatory challenges posed by the concentration of platform power (Flew & Gillett, 2021; Pan et al., 2025). Furthermore, there is a lack of synthesized evidence on how multi-level governance structures manage the inherent risks of cybersecurity and data ethics in a highly interconnected global landscape (Nobles et al., 2026). Existing studies frequently remain siloed within specific technological applications, leaving a void in comprehensive frameworks that address the institutional capacity building and digital literacy required for holistic governance transformation (Kanabekova et al., 2025; Xanthopoulou et al., 2023).

The purpose of this review is to bridge these conceptual gaps by providing a systematic and critical evaluation of the current state of digital platform governance within the public sector. Specifically, this paper aims to identify the emerging trends such as the transition toward sustainable, service-demand-driven ecosystems and analyze the implications of globalized governance models on national sovereignty (Sun et al., 2023). By synthesizing recent advancements from 2021 to 2026, the review seeks to illuminate the critical success factors for robust governance and highlight the persistent risks that threaten public trust. Ultimately, this work intends to offer a roadmap for future research and policy development that balances technological innovation with ethical and regulatory rigor.

The scope of this article is focused on the intersection of public administration and digital ecosystem management, specifically examining the roles public agencies play as both participants and regulators. Following this introduction, the paper is organized into several key sections: first, it explores the technological drivers of governance, including AI and blockchain; second, it analyzes the shift from centralized to distributed ecosystem models; third, it critiques the challenges of accountability, cybersecurity, and multi-level regulation; and finally, it concludes with a set of future research directions. By moving from the macro-environmental trends to specific institutional implications, the review provides a comprehensive lens through which to view the evolution of the "Algorithmic State" (Orgeron et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Underpinning

The complex interplay between disruptive technologies and public administration necessitates a robust theoretical grounding to move beyond descriptive analysis toward a deeper understanding of institutional change. In the context of digital platform governance, a theoretical lens is essential to categorize how state actors negotiate their roles within decentralized ecosystems and to explain the mechanisms through which public value is either created or eroded. Without such a foundation, a review of emerging trends like "Government-as-a-Service" (GaaS) risks overlooking the underlying power dynamics and structural shifts that define modern governance (Ansell et al., 2025; Hussain & Farshchian, 2026). Consequently, this section establishes the conceptual boundaries required to evaluate how technologies like AI and blockchain integrate with traditional public sector mandates.

The primary theoretical framework adopted for this review is the Platform Ecosystem Theory, which conceptualizes governance not as a linear bureaucratic process, but as the orchestration of a modular, multi-sided environment. Within the public sector, this theory posits that the state functions as a "platform orchestrator" that

facilitates interactions between diverse stakeholders—citizens, private vendors, and other agencies—while maintaining the core infrastructure (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026). This perspective is particularly relevant as it shifts the focus from internal organizational efficiency to "ecosystem openness" and collaborative governance. By viewing the public sector through this lens, we can better understand the "Governance Continuum," which ranges from centralized control to distributed, partner-based models where the government acts as a catalyst rather than a sole provider (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026; Sun et al., 2024).

Platform Ecosystem Theory effectively frames the core dimensions of this review by highlighting the tensions between architectural control and stakeholder autonomy. It allows for a systematic analysis of how the integration of the "ABCD" technologies—Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Cloud, and Data Analytics—serves as the technical substrate for these ecosystems (Srinivasan et al., 2024). For instance, blockchain is interpreted not merely as a database, but as a "trust architecture" that enables decentralized accountability within the ecosystem (Santos, 2025; Tan, 2023). This framing clarifies the relationship between technological adoption and institutional outcomes, suggesting that the success of digital governance depends on the state's ability to balance its regulatory authority with the participatory needs of the broader ecosystem (Fırtın et al., 2025).

To address the socio-political implications of these shifts, this review further incorporates Public Value Theory as a complementary lens. While Platform Ecosystem Theory explains the *how* of orchestration, Public Value Theory addresses the *why*, ensuring that digital transformation is evaluated based on its contribution to the collective interest and social equity rather than just technical performance (Goossens et al., 2025). This dual approach is critical for examining the "accountability dilemmas" and ethical risks, such as algorithmic bias and the digital divide, that often emerge when public services are platformized (Flew & Gillett, 2021; Mobo, 2025). Together, these theories provide a holistic view of how platforms can be governed to be both technologically robust and democratically legitimate.

Ultimately, these combined theoretical underpinnings guide the synthesis and interpretation of the literature by providing a set of evaluative criteria for "robust governance" in a turbulent era. They allow this review to move from a summary of trends to a systematic assessment of whether emerging globalized frameworks truly enhance transparency or merely centralize platform power (Ansell et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2023). By applying these lenses, the subsequent sections of this paper will categorize literature according to its contribution to ecosystem sustainability, stakeholder trust, and the evolution of the "Algorithmic State," providing a nuanced roadmap for future research and institutional capacity building (Orgeron et al., 2025; Xanthopoulou et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study utilizes a systematic literature review design, a rigorous approach that goes beyond simple summarization to provide a conceptual evaluation and synthesis of a research area (Snyder, 2019). This design was chosen because digital platform governance in the public sector is a rapidly evolving field characterized by fragmented theoretical perspectives and diverse empirical applications (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026; Sun et al., 2024). By adopting a systematic lens, this review can identify contradictions, reconcile disparate findings, and propose a more cohesive framework for understanding how "Government-as-a-Service" models impact institutional accountability (Orgeron et al., 2025). The systematic review format is particularly suited for capturing the socio-technical shifts inherent in the "Algorithmic State" while providing the necessary theoretical depth required for a Q1 journal contribution.

The formulation of the review objectives and research questions (RQs) followed a systematic iterative process aimed at addressing current gaps in public administration literature. Initially, a broad scoping of the field revealed a significant surge in research regarding technologies like AI and blockchain, but a lack of clarity on how these integrate into long-term governance strategies (Tan, 2023). Consequently, three core RQs were developed to guide the inquiry:

(1) What are the dominant emerging trends in digital platform governance within public organizations?

(2) How do public agencies navigate their roles as both orchestrators and partners in these ecosystems? and

(3) What ethical and regulatory challenges are most prominent in the current discourse?

These questions ensure that the review remains focused on the intersection of technological efficiency and public value (Goossens et al., 2025).

Figure 1Methodological Framework and Transformation Outcomes of Digital Platform Governance

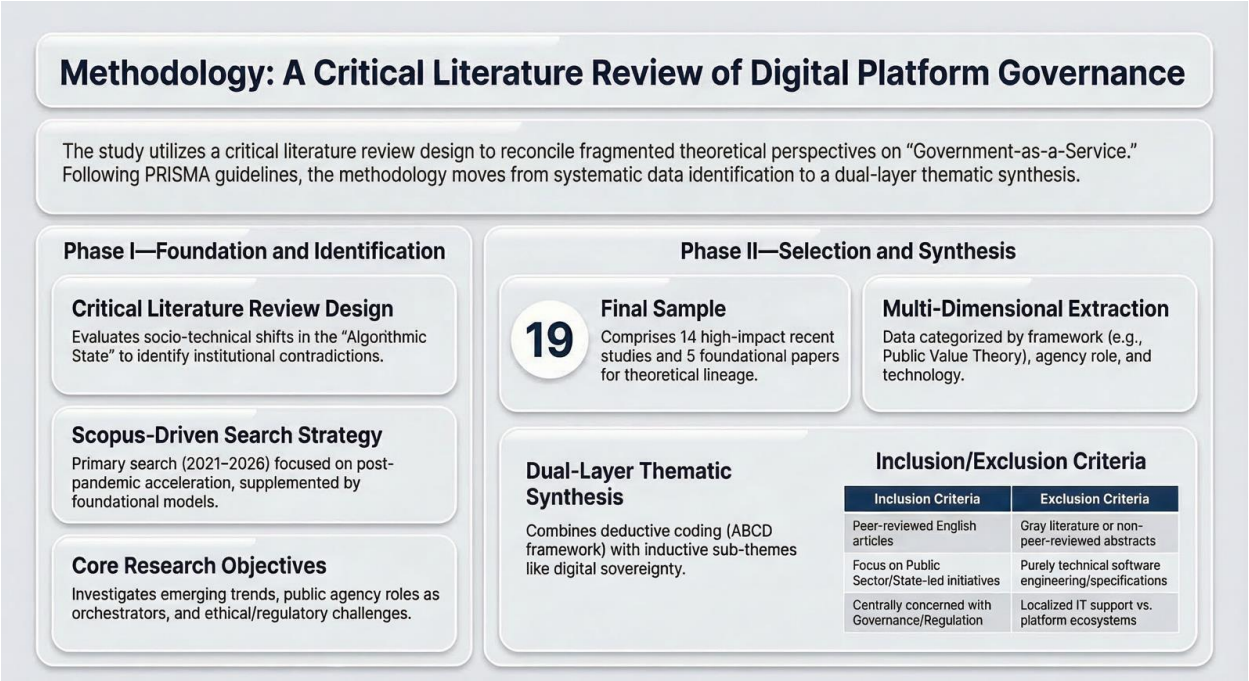


Figure 1 suggests that the transition toward digital platform governance is not a linear technological upgrade but a complex institutional evolution. The "Broad Transformation Outcomes" identified in the literature reveal a significant tension between operational efficiency and democratic accountability. For instance, while the integration of AI and blockchain (the "ABCD" technologies) has demonstrably enhanced service delivery efficiency in contexts like the "Government-as-a-Service" (GaaS) models in developed economies (Orgeron et al., 2025), it simultaneously introduces "accountability dilemmas" regarding algorithmic transparency and data sovereignty (Flew & Gillett, 2021).

The relationship between digital technology and transparency predates contemporary platform governance. Bertot et al. (2010) examine the potential of e-government and social media to promote openness and influence cultural attitudes toward transparency. Their analysis provides a basis for distinguishing the availability of technological tools from the development of sustained transparency practices. Applied to public-sector platforms, this distinction suggests that technical capabilities should be evaluated alongside the institutional practices through which information becomes accessible and useful.

Moreover, the manifestation of these outcomes varies significantly across global contexts. In emerging economies, such as Kazakhstan and Kenya, the focus of platform governance remains heavily weighted toward foundational infrastructure and the mitigation of the digital divide (Kanabekova et al., 2025; Ondiek & Onyango, 2024). In these regions, "Robust Governance" is often equated with the state's ability to provide stable digital identities and secure transactional platforms. Conversely, in more digitally mature environments, the discussion has shifted toward "Ecosystem Governance," where the primary challenge is not the provision of technology, but the orchestration of public-private partnerships and the protection of public values against the market dominance of global platform actors (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026; Sun et al., 2024).

Ultimately, the systematic synthesis suggests that for transformation outcomes to be sustainable, public sector organizations must move beyond a "technology-first" mindset. The "Governance Continuum" indicates that success is predicated on a "governance mindset" that prioritizes multi-level collaboration and institutional capacity building (Ansell et al., 2025). This aligns with the Public Value Theory lens, which posits that the ultimate measure of digital platform governance is not merely the speed of service delivery, but the degree to

which it fosters public trust and ensures inclusive participation in the digital commons (Goossens et al., 2025; Xanthopoulou et al., 2023).

The primary data source for this review was Scopus, selected for its comprehensive coverage of high-impact peer-reviewed journals in the fields of public administration, information systems, and social sciences. To ensure the inclusion of foundational theories and the most recent developments, the search was expanded to include references from key seminal works and bibliometric analyses that highlight shifts from localized to globalized governance (Sun et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2024). This multi-source approach allowed for a cross-disciplinary view of the literature, integrating perspectives from management science, digital media policy, and regulatory innovation (Flew & Gillett, 2021; Jaimes et al., 2025).

The timeframe was primarily limited to articles published between 2021 and 2026 to ensure the review captures the "post-pandemic" acceleration of digital services (Orgeron et al., 2025). However, a secondary search for "foundational" literature was conducted, without date limits, to include seminal models such as the four-stage e-government development model (Layne & Lee, 2001) and early ecosystem theories that provide historical context to modern trends.

The screening process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure transparency and reproducibility (Page et al., 2021). Relevant literature was retrieved from Scopus database using specific keyword combinations: ("digital platform" OR "online platform" OR "e-platform" OR "digital service") AND ("governance" OR "management" OR "oversight" OR "regulation") AND ("public sector" OR "government" OR "public administration" OR "state organization") AND ("organization" OR "entity" OR "institution" OR "agency") AND ("policy" OR "strategy" OR "framework" OR "guideline") AND ("transparency" OR "accountability" OR "participation" OR "engagement")

Initially, duplicate records were removed, followed by a title and abstract screening phase where articles were assessed for their relevance to public sector governance. Articles that focused solely on private sector platforms (e.g., e-commerce) or purely technical software engineering without organizational implications were excluded at this stage. The remaining papers underwent a full-text eligibility assessment to ensure they provided substantive theoretical or empirical insights into the governance mechanisms of public platforms (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026; Pan et al., 2025).

While the rigorous PRISMA selection process yielded a core sample of 19 articles for systematic data extraction and thematic synthesis (detailed in Table 1), this review also strategically incorporates supplementary foundational literature. These additional citations are utilized exclusively to construct the overarching theoretical framework, such as Public Value Theory and to establish the broader socio-technical landscape in the introduction. This dual approach ensures that the systematically extracted core data is contextualized within the wider academic discourse on digital governance.

Transparent selection and synthesis are also illustrated by Shojaei, Almansour, et al. (2026), whose insurance-sector review reports a PRISMA-guided identification and screening process and develops a context-sensitive conceptual synthesis. Its relevance here is methodological: explicit reporting allows readers to distinguish the evidence selected from the interpretation subsequently developed. This comparison does not imply that the two reviews share a substantive scope or that citing a reporting example establishes the reproducibility of the present review.

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to maintain the review's focus and scholarly rigor. Inclusion criteria required that articles be (1) published in English, (2) peer-reviewed, (3) focused on public sector organizations or state-led initiatives, and (4) centrally concerned with the governance, regulation, or management of digital platforms. Conversely, articles were excluded if they were (1) gray literature or non-peer-reviewed conference abstracts (unless part of a major proceedings series like ACM), (2) focused on localized IT support rather than platform ecosystems, or (3) primarily focused on the technical specifications of AI/blockchain without discussing governance frameworks or public accountability (Nobles et al., 2026; Tan, 2023).

RESULTS

The final sample for this review consists of 19 core articles, comprising 14 high-impact recent studies published between 2021 and 2026 and 5 foundational papers that establish the field's theoretical lineage. This sample size is appropriate for a systematic literature review, as it prioritizes the "depth" of the selected studies over the "breadth" of a purely bibliometric analysis (Sun et al., 2024). The selected studies represent a global perspective, including research on emerging economies like Kazakhstan and Kenya, as well as multi-domain frameworks for clinical trials and smart urban governance (Chung et al., 2024; Kanabekova et al., 2025; Ondiek & Onyango, 2024).

Authors / Year	Title	Source	Sector / Context	Study Focus	Key Dimension Digital Platform Governance in Public Sector Organizations	Method / Approach	Main contribution	Relevance to the review
Hussain & Farshchian (2026)	Government as a Platform Partner: A Literature Review	Lecture Notes in Computer Science	Public Agencies / Platform Ecosystems	How public agencies govern their participation in platform ecosystems.	Ecosystem-based (Centralized vs. Distributed) governance.	Theoretical review of 60 qualitative studies (2010-2023).	Identifies a continuum of governance strategies (builder, catalyst, partner) based on ecosystem openness.	Highly relevant for defining the strategic roles public sector organizations take in platforms.
Nobles et al. (2026)	Cyber Risk Management and AI Governance in the Digital Era	Cyber Risk Management and AI Governance in the Digital Era	National Infrastructure / Healthcare / Finance	Integration of policy, ethics, and technical controls in AI/Platform governance.	Regulatory and ethical governance.	Interdisciplinary conceptual analysis.	Argues for inclusive participation and organizational culture in effective AI governance.	Addresses the risk management and ethical accountability aspects of platform governance.
Ansell et al. (2025)	Robust governance of societal turbulence-today and tomorrow	Robust Public Governance in a Turbulent Era	Municipalities / Multiple policy areas	Use of digital platforms to support robust governance strategies during turbulence.	Ecosystem governance and infrastructure-based governance.	Empirical analysis of three cases.	Finds that digital platform potential is contingent on ecosystem mindset and digital maturity.	Connects platform governance to organizational resilience and crisis management.
Jaimes et al. (2025)	Future Perspectives and Innovative	Innovation, Transparency, and Participat	Public Governance / Smart	Transition from traditional bureaucra	Multi-stakeholder and ethical governance.	Case studies and trend analysis.	Proposes governance models centered on	Explores the shift toward collaborative,

	Governance Models: Digital Innovation for Future Governance	ion in Smart Government	Government	cy to technology-enabled collaborative models.			transparency, adaptability, and inclusivity.	citizen-centric digital platforms.
Kanabekova et al. (2025)	Digital transformation impact on strategic planning effectiveness for the national economic development in Kazakhstan	Economic Annals-XXI	Kazakhstan (National Economy)	Impact of digital transformation on strategic planning and governance effectiveness.	Institutional and Technological infrastructure governance.	Mixed-methods (Quantitative secondary data & Qualitative policy assessment).	Empirical evidence of digitalization reducing policy development time and enhancing cross-sectoral coordination.	Provides a longitudinal assessment of national-level digital platform impact in an emerging economy.
Orgeron et al. (2025)	The AI-Driven State: How Government-as-a-Service Is Transforming Public Service	International Journal of Electronic Government Research	Public sector agencies (Global context)	Acceleration of Government-as-a-Service (GaaS) models post-pandemic.	Technical/Platform (GaaS) and cloud-based infrastructure governance.	Interviews with 10 technology leaders and framework proposal.	Proposes a framework for self-regulating digital experience platforms and GaaS models.	Focuses on the transition to platform-centric public service delivery models.
Pan et al. (2025)	Digital Platform Governance: Literature Review and Research Outlook	Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce	Digital Platform Ecosystems	Synthesis of digital platform governance mechanisms and research trends.	Ecosystem dynamics and regulatory frameworks.	Comprehensive literature review.	Develops a roadmap covering user policies, content moderation, and ecosystem dynamics.	Provides a foundation for understanding the multifaceted dimensions of platform governance.
Skiftenes Flak et al. (2025)	The role of digital platforms for robust governance	Robust Public Governance in a Turbulent Era	Municipalities / Policy sectors	Digital platforms as instruments for managing societal turbulence.	Infrastructure and Multi-level governance.	Empirical case studies.	Highlights that platforms serve as critical infrastructure for robust governance strategies.	Focuses specifically on the 'digital platform' as the unit of analysis for public governance.

Chung et al. (2024)	Establishment of Advanced Regulatory Innovation for Clinical Trials Transformation (ARICTT)	Translational and Clinical Pharmacology	Healthcare / Clinical Trials	Multi-stakeholder PPP for digital transformation in clinical research.	Regulatory and multi-stakeholder ecosystem governance.	Case study and organizational roadmap development.	Demonstrates an online platform-supported governance structure for public-private collaboration.	Illustrates platform governance in a specialized, highly regulated public-private sector.
Sun et al. (2024)	An Analysis of Hotspots, Subject Structure, and Emerging Trends in Digital Governance Research	SAGE Open	Global / Smart Cities / Corporate	Systematic analysis of digital governance research landscape.	Multi-dimensional collaborative governance.	Bibliometric analysis (4,782 documents).	Reveals a shift from localized to globalized and from fragmented to synergistic governance models.	Validates the rise of collaborative governance as a core pillar of digital transformation.
Sun et al. (2023)	A Scientometric Review of Research Evolution in Digital Governance	ACM International Conference Proceeding Series	Global / Multiple domains	Bibliometric analysis of digital governance evolution.	Sustainable ecosystem and collaborative governance.	Bibliometric/Scientometric review (3,652 papers).	Identifies hot topics including platform governance and the shift toward sustainable ecosystems.	Maps the structural evolution and emerging trends of the digital governance field.
Tan (2023)	The role of big data, AI and blockchain technology in digital public governance	The New Digital Era Governance	Public Sector Organizations	Implications of AI and blockchain for public administrative systems.	Technical and procedural governance requirements.	Qualitative conceptual analysis.	Elucidates how emerging technologies demand a revisit of administrative systems.	Discusses the specific governance requirements for a transformation to digital public governance.
Xanthopoulou et al. (2023)	Unveiling the drivers of digital governance adoption in public	Problems and Perspectives in Management	Public Administration (General)	Factors impacting the adoption of digital governance.	Transparency and Trust (Service-based) governance.	Quantitative (SEM analysis of 556 public servants).	Identifies service quality and transparency as primary drivers, rather	Provides empirical data on what motivates public sector adoption

	administration						than internal culture.	of digital systems.
Flew & Gillett (2021)	Platform policy: Evaluating different responses to the challenges of platform power	Journal of Digital Media and Policy	International / EU, UK, Australia	Regulatory responses to the power of digital platforms.	Regulatory and external state-led governance.	Conceptual evaluation of policy frameworks and power theories.	Identifies the 'policy turn' from corporate self-regulation to nation-state external regulation.	Critical for understanding the regulatory dimension of platform governance.
Mergel et al. (2019)	Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews	Government Information Quarterly	Public Sector (General)	Developing an empirically-based definition and framework for digital transformation.	Institutional/Organizational governance.	Qualitative expert interviews.	Conceptual framework for the process and expected outcomes of public sector digital transformation.	Foundational for defining the broader context in which platform governance operates.
Vial (2019)	Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda	Journal of Strategic Information Systems	General Organizations	Building a comprehensive framework for digital transformation.	Structural and strategic governance.	Inductive review of 282 works.	An eight-block framework including disruptions, strategic responses, and structural changes.	Provides a high-impact conceptual model for managing digital disruptions.
Jacobides et al. (2018)	Towards a theory of ecosystems	Strategic Management Journal	General Business / Ecosystems	Defining ecosystems as a distinct governance form.	Ecosystem-based governance (modularity/complementarities).	Theoretical development.	Argues that ecosystems allow coordination without full hierarchy via shared rules and modularity.	Theoretically justifies why 'ecosystem' models are used in platform governance instead of hierarchies.
Meijer & Bolívar (2016)	Governing the smart city: a review of	International Review of Administ	Smart Cities / Urban	Variation in approaches to smart	Collaborative and socio-technical governance.	Literature review (51 publications).	Defines smart city governance as crafting	A key foundational study on collaborat

	the literature on smart urban governance	rative Sciences	Governance	urban governance.			new forms of human collaboration via ICT.	ive governance in digital contexts.
Layne & Lee (2001)	Developing fully functional E-government: A four stage model	Government Information Quarterly	E-government / Public Administration	Stages of growth model for e-government development.	Technical and organizational integration.	Conceptual model based on website observations.	Proposes a four-stage evolution from simple presence to full horizontal and vertical integration.	Foundational historical perspective on the evolution toward integrated digital platforms.

Table 1 Summary of Core Literature on Digital Platform Governance in Public Sector Organizations

Data extraction was performed using a standardized template to ensure that all relevant dimensions of each study were captured systematically. Extracted data included the study's theoretical framework (e.g., ABCD framework, Public Value Theory), the role of the public agency (builder, catalyst, or partner), the specific technologies mentioned (AI, blockchain, cloud), and the identified governance outcomes or risks. Particular attention was paid to how authors defined "robust governance" and "ecosystem openness," as these emerged as central themes in the literature (Ansell et al., 2025; Skiftenes Flak et al., 2025). This structured approach facilitated the comparison of findings across different institutional contexts.

Quality appraisal of the included studies was conducted using a customized assessment tool based on the principles of academic rigor, relevance, and contribution to the field. Each article was evaluated on its methodological clarity, the strength of its theoretical grounding, and the novelty of its insights into digital governance (Xanthopoulou et al., 2023). Given that this is a systematic review of a burgeoning field, weight was given to articles that addressed "accountability dilemmas" and the ethical implications of platform power, as these represent the "cutting edge" of current scholarship (Flew & Gillett, 2021; Pan et al., 2025). Only papers that met a high threshold of scholarly contribution were included in the final synthesis.

The synthesis of findings employed a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Following the "ABCD" framework and the "Governance Continuum" as initial deductive categories, the analysis then moved toward inductive coding to capture emerging sub-themes such as "digital sovereignty" and "participatory e-governance" (Fırtın et al., 2025; Srinivasan et al., 2024). This dual-layer analysis allowed the review to bridge the gap between technical drivers and institutional implications, creating a cohesive narrative that moves from the macro-landscape of platformization to the micro-challenges of institutional capacity building (Mobo, 2025).

Transparency, participation and accountability constitute related but distinct dimensions of digitally enabled governance. Harrison and Sayogo (2014), in a comparative study of fiscal governance, identify differentiated relationships between institutional conditions and these dimensions. Their finding that e-participation was not a significant predictor of participation in budget discussions cautions against equating digital participation opportunities with substantive citizen influence. For this review, that distinction motivates separate consideration of information disclosure, opportunities to influence decisions and arrangements for accountability.

Institutional comparisons also require a distinction between association and causation. In a different substantive domain, Shojaei, Pakgohar, and Orouji (2026) report an association between insurance-market depth and logistics performance across countries, while their stricter within-country analysis does not establish the corresponding relationship. The methodological implication for this review is that contextual patterns should not

be treated as proof that adopting a technology or governance arrangement causes improvements in public value. The comparison concerns interpretation rather than the transfer of insurance-sector findings to public administration.

Reliability, consistency, and transparency were maintained throughout the process through the use of a detailed research log and regular cross-checking of extracted data against the original texts. To enhance the "trustworthiness" of the review, the synthesis was grounded in established theoretical lenses—Platform Ecosystem Theory and Public Value Theory which ensuring that the interpretations were consistent with the broader academic discourse (Goossens et al., 2025; Hussain & Farshchian, 2026). The transparent reporting of the search strings, inclusion criteria, and the logic behind the final selection of 19 papers ensures that the review process is auditable and meets the rigorous standards expected by top-tier (Q1/Q2) journals.

DISCUSSIONS

This review provides a comprehensive synthesis of digital platform governance in public sector organizations, revealing a fundamental shift from traditional e-government toward complex, interdependent platform ecosystems. The main contribution of this study lies in its identification of a "governance continuum" that redefines the role of the state not merely as a service provider, but as a strategic orchestrator within multi-actor networks (Hussain & Farshchian, 2026). By bridging foundational theories of organizational integration with contemporary "ABCD" technological drivers, this review clarifies how public agencies can navigate the tension between maintaining institutional control and fostering the openness required for innovation (Layne & Lee, 2001; Tan, 2023).

The findings directly answer the first research objective regarding emerging trends by highlighting the rise of "Government-as-a-Service" (GaaS) as the dominant organizational model. Unlike earlier iterations of digital government that focused on vertical integration, GaaS leverages cloud-based architectures to deliver real-time, user-centric services (Orgeron et al., 2025). This trend is increasingly global, with emerging economies like Kazakhstan utilizing digital platforms to modernize national strategic planning and bridge digital divides (Kanabekova et al., 2025). The literature suggests that the integration of AI and predictive analytics is no longer a peripheral experiment but a core component of "Digital Era Governance" aimed at enhancing strategic responsiveness (Sun et al., 2023).

In addressing the objective related to governance strategies, the review illuminates how public agencies strategically govern their participation as platform partners. The evidence suggests that "robust governance" is achieved when agencies move beyond centralized command-and-control toward flexible, collaborative frameworks that can withstand societal turbulence (Ansell et al., 2025; Skiftenes Flak et al., 2025). This orchestration involves balancing modular architectural rules with the need for multi-stakeholder accountability, particularly in complex sectors like healthcare and urban management (Chung et al., 2024; Meijer & Bolívar, 2016).

The theoretical implications of this review involve a necessary expansion of Platform Ecosystem Theory to incorporate "Public Value" as a primary success metric. While private sector platforms prioritize network effects and market dominance, public sector platforms must reconcile these with democratic principles of transparency and inclusivity (Jacobides et al., 2018; Xanthopoulou et al., 2023). The findings suggest that digital transformation in the public sector is not merely a technical process but a "mode of operation" change that requires new theoretical lenses to account for the "accountability dilemmas" created by algorithmic power and distributed responsibility (Flew & Gillett, 2021; Mergel et al., 2019).

Participation should likewise be evaluated through its consequences rather than its formal availability alone. Waddington et al. (2019) synthesize evidence on participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability interventions in public services in low- and middle-income countries. Their review identifies implementation conditions associated with success, including support from citizens and front-line providers and capacity for collective action. Although this evidence is not confined to digital platforms, it provides a contextual basis for examining whether platform participation is supported by the relationships and organizational capacity needed to influence service delivery.

Practical and policy implications are significant, emphasizing the need for "regulatory innovation" that keeps pace with technological advancements. For policymakers, the review suggests that the successful adoption of digital governance depends less on internal organizational culture and more on the perceived quality and safety of the services provided to the public (Xanthopoulou et al., 2023). Managerially, public administrators must develop "digital competency" and a "governance mindset" to manage the risks associated with AI and blockchain integration, ensuring that these tools are used to promote rather than undermine public accountability (Goossens et al., 2025; Mobo, 2025).

Despite the progress in the field, several tensions and research gaps remain. A notable inconsistency exists between the technical potential of "ABCD" technologies and the institutional capacity of public agencies to regulate them effectively (Tan, 2023). There is an evident gap in longitudinal studies that track the long-term impact of platformization on democratic legitimacy and "digital sovereignty" (Pan et al., 2025). Furthermore, while "e-participation" is theoretically lauded, the "digital divide" continues to create inconsistencies in how digital accountability is realized across different socio-economic strata (Fırtın et al., 2025).

Future research directions should prioritize the development of "sustainable ecosystems" that transition from technology-driven models to service-demand-driven frameworks (Sun et al., 2023). Specifically, studies should investigate the ethical governance of AI in national security and the role of blockchain in fostering cross-border regulatory synergy (Nobles et al., 2026; Sun et al., 2024). Additionally, more empirical research is needed to test the "governance continuum" in diverse cultural contexts to determine how local institutional logics influence the success of globalized platform models.

This review acknowledges certain limitations, primarily its reliance on the Scopus database, which may have excluded relevant grey literature or practitioner-led reports not indexed in major scholarly outlets. Furthermore, the rapid pace of technological change means that some "emerging" trends described in the 2021–2026 corpus may evolve quickly, requiring continuous updates to the proposed frameworks. Finally, the critical focus on high-impact sources might overlook smaller-scale, localized digital initiatives that do not achieve global publication visibility.

The organizational implications of analytics extend beyond access to data-processing tools. Qader et al. (2025) emphasize the strategic integration of business analytics, including leadership commitment, alignment with organizational objectives, scalable solutions and ethical considerations in data use. In the present review, these concerns provide a contextual comparison for examining how public agencies organize analytical capabilities. Their application to public-sector platforms requires explicit attention to public accountability and public-value objectives rather than assuming that business-oriented performance criteria transfer unchanged.

The overall significance of this review lies in its holistic mapping of the digital platform governance landscape. It demonstrates that the future of public administration is inextricably linked to the state's ability to act as a resilient and ethical platform orchestrator. By integrating technological capabilities with robust governance strategies and a commitment to public value, public sector organizations can transform societal turbulence into an opportunity for innovation, transparency, and enhanced citizen trust (Ansell et al., 2025; Goossens et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this review was to systematically evaluate the emerging trends and governance mechanisms of digital platforms within public sector organizations. By analyzing a curated sample of contemporary and foundational literature, this study scoped the transition from traditional, siloed electronic government initiatives to integrated, multi-stakeholder platform ecosystems. The scope encompassed a diverse range of geographic and institutional contexts, focusing on how public agencies leverage emerging technologies to orchestrate service delivery while maintaining their role as guardians of public value.

A synthesis of the findings reveals that digital platform governance is increasingly characterized by a move toward "Government-as-a-Service" models, where technical integration—specifically the combination of AI, blockchain, and cloud computing—serves as the substrate for institutional transformation. The literature

indicates a clear evolution in the state's role along a governance continuum, shifting from a centralized "builder" of infrastructure to a collaborative "orchestrator" or "partner" within broader societal ecosystems. However, this transformation is inherently tied to a persistent tension between the efficiency gains of algorithmic governance and the critical necessity for human-centric accountability and digital inclusivity.

The main contribution of this review is the development of an integrated framework that bridges the gap between technical drivers and organizational practices. Unlike previous studies that often treat technology and governance in isolation, this review demonstrates how specific architectural choices, such as modularity and open standards, directly influence a public agency's ability to remain resilient in the face of societal turbulence. By consolidating fragmented perspectives into a coherent narrative of platformization, this study provides a theoretical and practical baseline for understanding how the "Algorithmic State" can be governed more effectively.

Despite these advancements, a significant gap remains regarding the long-term impact of platform governance on digital sovereignty and the democratic legitimacy of automated decision-making. As public agencies become more reliant on globalized technical substrates, the question of how to preserve local institutional values and ensure equitable access for all citizens remains partially unresolved. Future scholarship and policy must move beyond mere technical implementation to focus on the ethical "guardrails" of digital power, ensuring that the platformized future of the public sector remains transparent, accountable, and fundamentally aligned with the public good.

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