

Designing an agile public sector by digital transformation sustainable organizational models, and HRM practices

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, and digitally driven (VUCAD) world, the convergence of digital transformation and sustainability posed both significant challenges (e.g., economic crisis, COVID-19, geopolitical and energy crisis) and unprecedented opportunities to organizations, their arrangements (workflows, teamwork, leadership, and culture) and human resources management (HRM). Digital tools allowed the introduction of new forms of working that revolutionized traditional work practices and respective organizations by redefining individual and organizational boundaries, and social bonds with the introduction of greater flexibility and autonomy in the choice of space, time and technological tools. In an era defined by fast technological evolution and evolving citizen expectations, the public sector, historically resistant to change, faces a pressing need for agility and adaptability to deliver high-value, real-time, digital, public services. All these have prompted research on the growing intensive use of agile working (e.g., smart, remote, hybrid work) from different angles including organizational or job design, human-centeredness or ethics of technologies adopted, and their effects on quality of work, employee well-being, organizational models, and economies overall. Despite the efforts to define clear boundaries and characteristics, the literature shows an overlapping conceptualization of the different forms of working with contrasting effects these have on employees, HRM, organizations and societies. For instance, a universally accepted definition of agile work is still missing, while often it is overlapping with smart, hybrid, flexible, tele, and remote work. The need for studying these forms relies upon the impact they have at the individual (e.g., diversity management, control, leadership, motivation, well-being), organizational (e.g., technology, performance, flexibility) and societal (e.g., circular economy impact considering environmental and productivity challenges and benefits due to changing employees commuting and resources consumption habits) levels. Nevertheless, realizing the full potential of digital transformation requires more than just technological adoption. It requires a holistic approach that defines sustainable organizational models to cultivate resilience, innovation and responsiveness within public sector entities. This enables them to thrive amidst uncertainty and change. The role of HRM practices is central in this transformation journey. Effective talent management, leadership development, and employee engagement strategies play an essential role in nurturing a culture of agility and empowering employees to embrace change as a catalyst for growth. By investing in lifelong learning and skill development, and fostering a culture based on inclusion and collaboration, public sector organizations can promote a workforce capable of driving innovation and delivering sustainable values and solutions to citizens in an ever-evolving landscape, in which no leave no one behind is crucial. Therefore, we expect contributions that explore the relationship between digital transformation and sustainable organizational models, and HRM practices in public domain. We welcome conceptual and empirical contributions, reviews, case studies, experience-in-the-field reports, and debate papers inspired by interdisciplinary, multi-level, multi-stakeholder, multi-method, and culture-sensitive approaches that could address existing and future challenges and uncertainties, define an agenda for future research, and provide good practice recommendations and instruments for designing and evaluating the relationship between technologies and HRM in public organizations.

Track main topics

A non-exhaustive list of relevant research topics includes:

- Agile organizational models in public domain;
- Digital transformation in public domain;
- e-HRM in public administrations;
- Technology, control, leadership, motivation, well-being in public domain;
- Technology, performance and flexibility in public domain;
- AI and emerging technologies in public sector;
- Digital inclusion, ensure equitable access to digital resources and services for all citizens, particularly marginalized communities or vulnerable groups;
- Ethical issue and legal frameworks regarding the use of digital technologies in public domain;
- New competence building and skills development for digital & sustainability
- Smart cities and sustainable urban development;

The XXI Conference of the Italian Chapter of AIS

- Organizational design and performance management system in public organizations;
- Collaborative approaches between governments, businesses, and civil society to drive innovation in digital technologies for sustainability.
- Circular economy approaches empowered by digital technologies: from waste management to resource optimization.
- Policy frameworks for digital & sustainability

References

1. Amankwah-Amoah, J., Khan, Z., Wood, G., Knight, G.: COVID-19 and digitalization: The great acceleration. *Journal of Business Research* 136, 602-611 (2021).
2. Bal, P., Izak, M.: Paradigms of flexibility: a systematic review of research on workplace flexibility. *European Management Review* 18 (1), 37-50 (2021).
3. Brunetto, Y., Beattie, R.: Changing role of HRM in the public sector. *Public Management Review* 22 (1), 1- 5 (2020).
4. Bunker, D.: Who do you trust? The digital destruction of shared situational awareness and the COVID-19 infodemic. *International Journal of Information Management* 55, 102201 (2020).
5. Christensen, T., Lægreid, P., Roness, P.G., Røvik, K.A.: *Organization Theory and the Public Sector. Instrument, culture and myth*, Routledge, London (2007).
6. De Nito, E., Pezzillo Iacono, M.: Rethinking the Concept of Competencies for Public Managers. In: Decastri, M., Battini, S., Buonocore, F., Gagliarducci, F.: *Organizational Development in Public Administration. The Italian Way*. 1 (2020).
7. Esposito, V., De Nito, E., Pezzillo Iacono, M., Silvestri, L.: Dealing with Knowledge in the Italian Public Universities: the role of Performance Management Systems. *Journal of Intellectual Capital* vol. 14(3), 431-450 (2013).
8. Gil-Garcia, J.R., Dawes, S.S., Pardo, T.A.: Digital government and public management research: finding the crossroads. *Public Management Review*, 20(5), 633-646 (2018).
9. Meijerink, J., Boons, M., Keegan, A., Marler, J.: Algorithmic human resource management: Synthesizing developments and cross-disciplinary insights on digital HRM. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 32(12), 2545-2562 (2021).
10. Todisco, L., Tomo, A., Canonico, P., Mangia, G.: The bright and dark side of smart working in the public sector: employees’ experiences before and during COVID-19. *Management Decision*, 1-40 (2022).
11. Tomo, A., Mangia, G., Hinna, A., Pellegrini, M.M.: Making collaborative governance effective: a case study on the pathway to successful public-private interactions. *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management* vol. 6, 36-55 (2020).
12. Tomo, A.: Bureaucracy, post-bureaucracy, or anarchy? Evidence from the Italian public administration. *International Journal of Public Administration* vol. 42, 482-496 (2019).

Track Co-Chairs

Name – Surname	Mario Pezzillo Iacono
Title	Full Professor of Organization Studies
E-mail	mario.pezzilloiacono@unicampania.it
Affiliation	University of Campania, “Luigi Vanvitelli”

The XXI Conference of the Italian Chapter of AIS

Short bio	Mario Pezzillo Iacono is a Full Professor of Organization Studies, Department of Economics - University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" - where he currently teaches Human Resource Management, Organizational Design and Sustainable Organizational Models. He holds a Ph.D. in Organization and Business Administration from the University of Molise. He was a visiting scholar at Cardiff Business School. He is author/co-author of over 110 scientific publications, on the following topics: organizational design and control in public and private domain, knowledge management in public and private organizations, organizational models in transport and logistics systems.
-----------	--

Name – Surname	Gianluigi Mangia
Title	Full Professor of Organization Studies
E-mail	mangia@unina.it
Affiliation	University of Naples, “Federico II”
Short bio	Gianluigi Mangia is a Full Professor of Organization Studies at the University of Napoli Federico II, Italy, where he teaches Organization theory, information systems, and human resources topics. He is the Coordinator of the Department of Human Resources Management at the Italian National School of Administration (SNA). He holds a Ph.D. in Organization and Business Administration from the University of Molise. He was a visiting scholar at Cardiff Business School, a visiting researcher at the London School of Economics, and a visiting doctoral student at Warwick Business School.

Name – Surname	Manuela Barreca
Title	Senior Lecturer and researcher in public management and governance
E-mail	manuela.barreca@usi.ch
Affiliation	Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) - Switzerland
Short bio	Manuela Barreca is a senior lecturer and researcher at Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) in Switzerland. Her teaching experience is in the field of public management and governance, social accountability, sustainability, and human resources management in public sector. Her research interests include network governance, public and private partnerships, public service motivations, civic crowdfunding, and innovation digital transformation. She has been involved in projects supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and EU INTERREG ITA-CH. She is a member of the International Institute of Administrative Science and the European Group of Public Administration. She co-chairs the permanent study groups IAS - Social Innovation, commons, and Administration and EGPA - Collaborative Networks and Social Innovation.

The XXI Conference of the Italian Chapter of AIS

Track Program Committee Members

Name	Affiliation	Country	email
Marcello Martinez	University of Campania, "Luigi Vanvitelli"	Italy	marcello.martinez@unicampania.it
Aizhan Tursunbayeva	University of Naples "Parthenope"	Italy	a.tursunbayeva@uniparthenope.it
Andrea Tomo	University of Naples "Federico II"	Italy	andrea.tomo@unina.it
Ernesto De Nito	University of Salerno	Italy	edenito@unisa.it
Vincenza Esposito	University of Benevento	Italy	vincespo@unisannio.it
Alessia Berni	University of Naples "Parthenope"	Italy	alessia.berni@uniparthenope.it