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# DIGITAL MATURITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

## A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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# DIGITAL MATURITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR : A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

# LA MATURITÉ NUM É RIQUE DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC : REVUE BIBLIOMETRIQUE ET AGENDA DE RECHERCHE

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# DIGITAL MATURITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA




## ABSTRACT

Digital maturity has emerged as a critical concept for evaluating the progress of public organisations in their digital transformation journey. Yet, despite growing scholarly interest, the literature remains fragmented across disciplines, concepts, and assessment approaches. This article provides a bibliometric review of the academic literature on digital maturity in the public sector, covering the period 2006-2026 and drawing on publications retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection. A PRISMA guided screening produced a final corpus of 135 unique documents. Using Bibliometrix (R) and VOSviewer, we combined performance analysis, thematic mapping, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling to map the evolution, intellectual foundations, and emerging research fronts of the field. The results reveal an emerging phase until the mid-2010s followed by a sharp acceleration after 2018, with output spread accross 97 sources and no dominant research school. Three thematic clusters structure the field : maturity models (diagnosis and measurement), digital transformation and e-governement (implementation), and organisational readiness (culture ans skills). Co-citation analysis identifies three knowledge communities centred on e-governement, public governance frameworks, and international standards.



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***Keywords : digital maturity; digital transformation; public sector; maturity models; bibliometric analysis.***

# LA MATURITÉ NUM É RIQUE DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC : REVUE BIBLIOMETRIQUE ET AGENDA DE RECHERCHE

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## ABSTRACT

La maturité numérique s'est imposée comme un concept essentiel pour évaluer la progression des organisations publiques dans leur transformation digitale. Pourtant, la littérature demeure fragmentée entre disciplines, concepts et approches d'évaluation. Cet article propose une revue bibliométrique de la littérature scientifique sur la maturité numérique dans le secteur public (2006-2026), à partir de Scopus et Web of Science Core Collection. Une sélection guidée par PRISMA a abouti à un corpus de 135 documents uniques. A l'aide de Bibliometrix (R) et de VOSviewer, nous combinons analyse de la performance, cartographie thématique, co-citation et couplage bibliographique. Les résultats révèlent une phase émergente jusqu'au milieu des années 2010, puis une forte accélération après 2018, avec une production dispersée entre 97 revues et sans école de recherche dominante. Trois clusters thématiques structurent le champ : modèles de maturité, transformation digitale et administration électronique, préparation organisationnelle. L'analyse de co-citation identifie trois communautés de connaissances.

***Mots-clés : maturité numérique ; transformation digitale ; secteur public ; modèle de maturité ; analyse bibliométrique.***

## 1- Introduction

The digital transformation of public organisations has become a central priority for governments worldwide. Broadly defined as the process through which organisations fundamentally reshape their strategies, processes and service delivery by leveraging digital technologies (Vial, 2019 ; Mergel et al., 2019), in the public sector, digital transformation goes beyond technological modernisation and entails profound organisational and governance change (Mergel et al.,2019; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). In this context, the concept of digital maturity has emerged as a key diagnostic tool for assessing how far public organisations have progressed in this transformation (Gokalp & Martinez, 2021 ; Andersen & Henriksen, 2006). Maturity models offer structured frameworks that allow governments to evaluate their capabilities across dimensions such as technology adoption, process integration,

data governance, and citizen engagement, and to identify priority areas for improvement (Gokalp & Martinez, 2021). The growing adoption of such frameworks by international bodies and national governments underscores both the practical relevance and the policy urgency of this research area ( OECD,2020).

Despite this growing interest, research on digital maturity in the public sector remains fragmented. Researchers from different fields (information systems, public administration, and e-government studies) have studied this topic separately, producing a large but disconnected body of work. Concepts are defined differently across studies, assessment dimensions vary from one model to another, and methodological approaches are inconsistent (Lezama Nicolas et al., 2018, Hassan et al., 2021). As a result, it is difficult to get a clear picture of how the field has evolved, who the key contributors are, and where the main gaps lie. A bibliometric study is therefore needed to map the structure of this literature, identify its intellectual foundations, and highlight emerging research directions (Oliveira et al., 2019).

This paper offers a comprhensive a bibliometric mapping of the research on digital maturity within the public sector between 2006-2026. Specifically, it addresses five research questions:

- RQ1. What is the evolution of scientific production on digital maturity in the public sector over 2006-2026 ?
- RQ2.Who are the leading contributors (authors, sources, institutions, countries) and how is the field structured in terms of impact ?
- RQ3. What are the main thematic clusters shaping the literature ?
- RQ4. What is the intellectual base and what are the main research fronts ?
- RQ5. What research gaps and agenda emerge, particularly regarding evaluation methods, governance capabilities, and public sector implementation ?

We analysed Scopus and Web of Science publications using Bibliometrix (R) and VOSviewer, following a PRISMA guided selection process.

The paper first presents the methodological choice and data collection procedure, then reports the bibliometrics results, before discussing their implications for research and practice, and finally drawing conclusions and outlining directions for future work.

## 2-Methodology

- **Data collection and screening**

The study relies on bibliometric methods to describe how research on digital maturity in the public sector has developed, what knowledge base it draws on and how its themes are organised.

Bibliometric analysis is widely recognized as rigorous and reproducible method for assessing the state of a research field, identifying its most influential contributors and tracing the conceptual trajectories that shape scientific discourse (Bretas & Alon, 2021 ; Zupic & Cater, 2015 ; Gaur & Kumar, 2018). The choice of database is crucial methodological decision, as it directly influences the availability, reliability, and thematic relevance of the literature retrieved (Özturk et al., 2024 ; Oliveria et al., 2019 ; Bigliardi & Filippelli, 2022). Consequently, data were extracted from two complementary and widely used multidisciplinary databases : Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection (WoS). Both

databases offer broad disciplinary coverage, rigorous indexing standards, and reliable citation metadata, making them particularly suitable for bibliometric research in the social sciences and management (Du et al., 2024 ; Lezama-Nicolas et al., 2018).

The search query was executed across titles, abstracts, and keywords, combining thematic terms with Boolean OR and AND operators and using quotation marks to enforce exact phrase matching. The Scopus query took the following forme :

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("digital maturity" OR "digital transformation maturity" OR "digital capability" OR "digital readiness" OR "e-government maturity") AND ("public sector" OR "public administration" OR "government agency" OR municipality OR "local government")

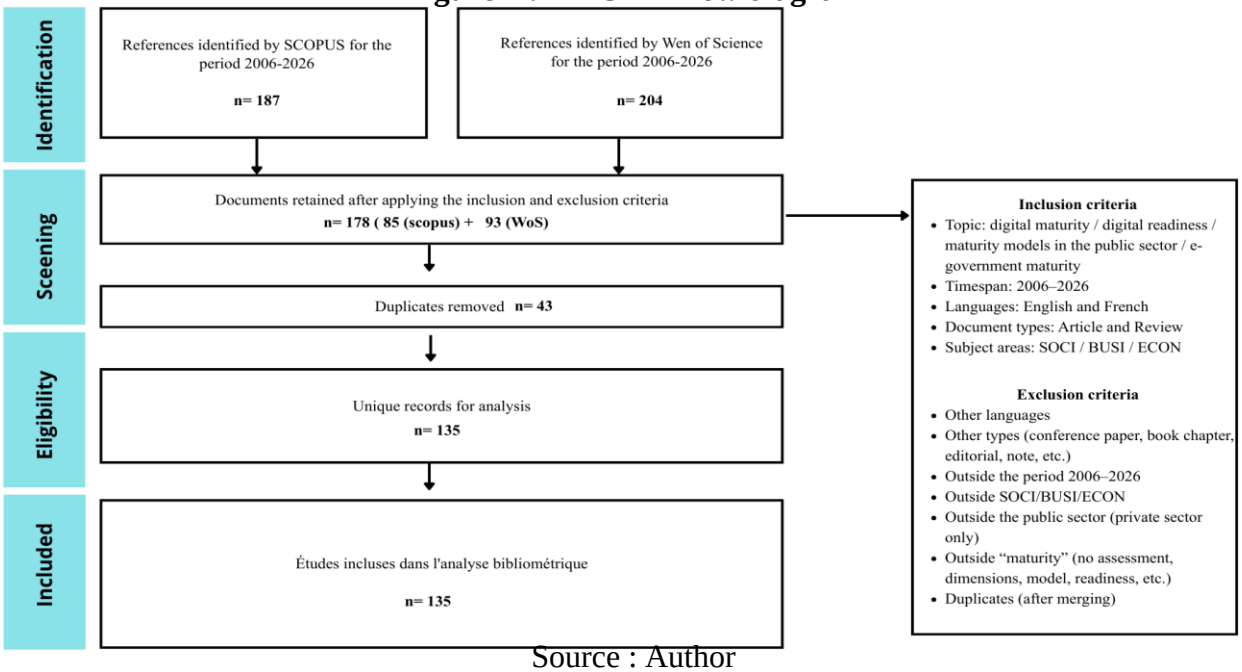
) AND PUBYEAR > 2004 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "re" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "French" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) ).

An equivalent query was constructed for WoS using field tags TS= ("digital maturity" OR "digital transformation maturity" OR "digital capability" OR "digital readiness" OR "e-government maturity") AND TS= ("public sector" OR "public administration" OR "government agency" OR municipality OR "local government") AND PY=(2006-2026) AND LA=(English OR French) AND DT=(Article OR Review).

Subject area filters corresponding to Social Sciences, Business, and Economics research areas were applied in WoS to ensure consistency with Scopus SOCI/ BUSIN/ECON subject area restrictions. Both searches were restricted to the timespan 2006-2026, to articles and reviews only, and to publications in English or French.

The screening workflow was documented following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis) protocol, which provides a transparent and structured reporting framework ( Nambiema et al., 2021), as illustrated in Figure 1

**Figure 1 : PRISMA flow diagram**




Source : Author

The initial Scopus search returned 187 records, of which 85 were retained after applying eligibility criteria, yielding 102 exclusions. The Web of Science search returned 204 records, of which 93 were retained after screening, yielding 111 exclusions. Merging the two retained sets produced a combined collection of 178 documents (85 from Scopus and 93 from WoS).

Following deduplication, 43 records identified as appearing in both databases were removed, producing a final analytical dataset of 135 unique documents.

- **Bibliometric analysis**

Exported records from both databases were merged and processed using Bibliometrix package in R, accessed through the Biblioshiny graphical interface (Hassan et al., 2021 ; Osorio Andrade et al., 2021). As Osorio Andrade et al. (2021) note, bibliometric tools such as Bibliometrix enable researchers to "quantitatively analyse large bodies of scientific literature in a systematic and reproducible manner". Standard data cleaning procedures were applied, including metadata harmonisation across the two database export formats, removal of duplicate record, and basic normalisation of author keywords to reduce redundant variant forms.

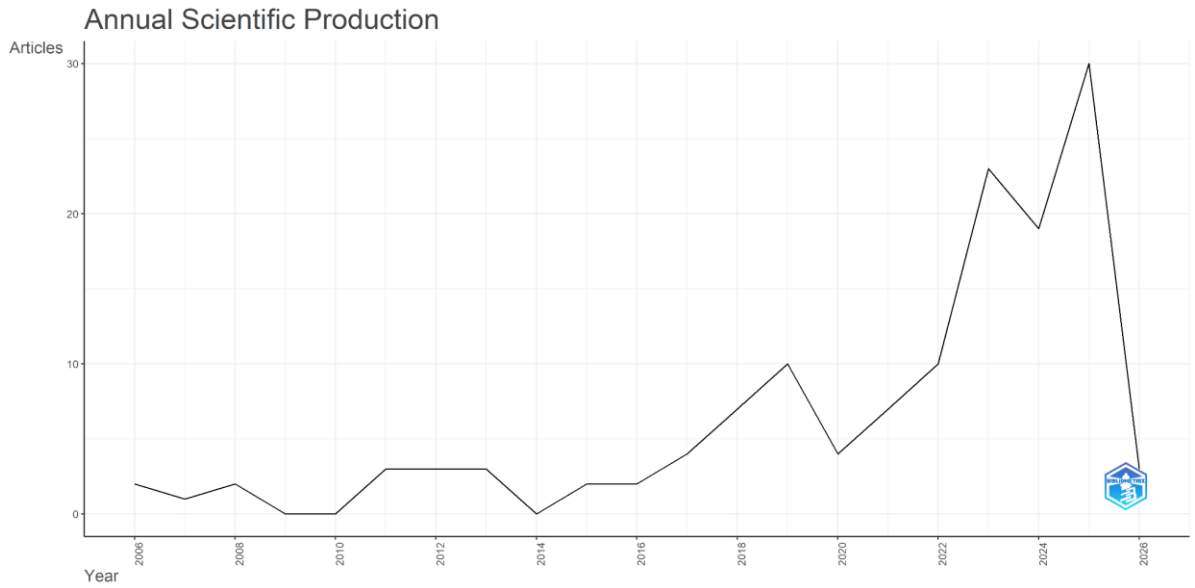
The analytical framework encompassed two complementary dimensions. Performance analysis examined annual scientific production, most productive sources, institutional affiliations, countries and corresponding author countries, as well as most cited documents providing a longitudinal and geographic portrait of the field's growth and influence structure.

Science mapping combined a thematic map and a keyword co-occurrence network to describe the field's conceptual structure. The intellectual structure of the field was further probed through co-citation analysis, which identifies the shared foundational references that underpin current scholarship, and through bibliographic coupling analysis, which reveals active research fronts by linking documents that share common references (Bretas & Alon, 2021 ; Zupic & Cater, 2015). The three networks (co-occurrence, co-citation, bibliographic coupling)

were built in VOSviewer 1.6.20 with association-strength normalisation (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

## 3- Bibliometric analysis results

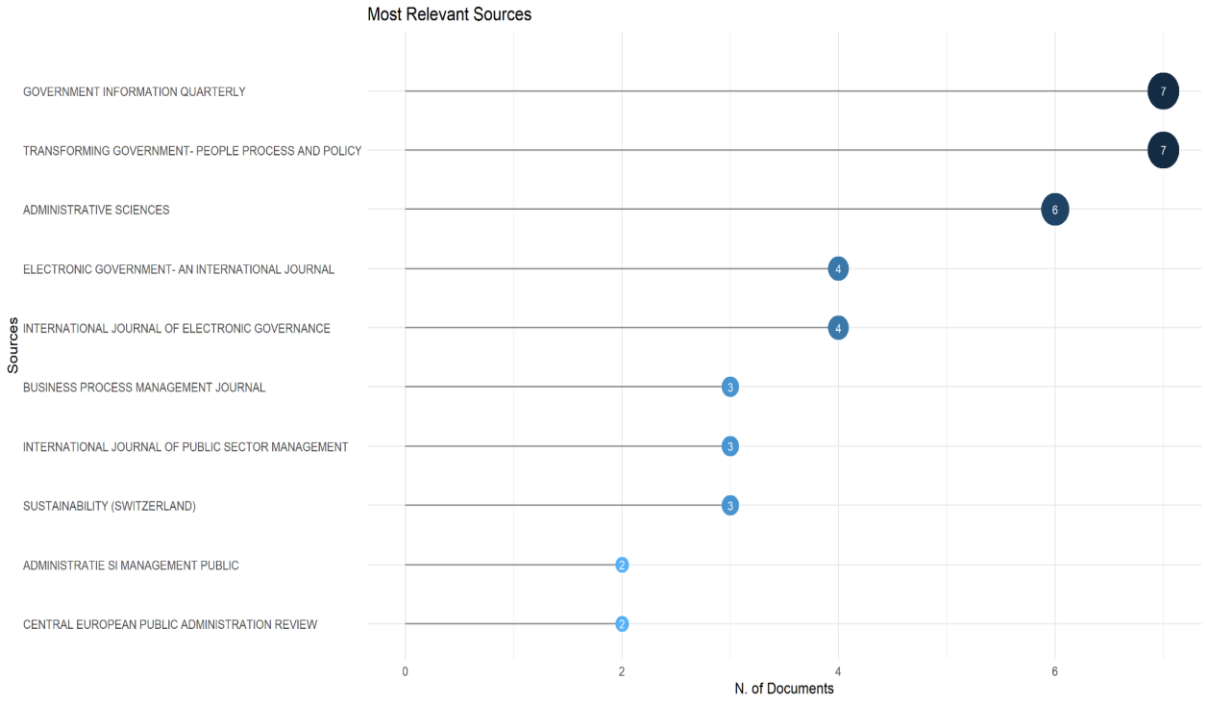
**Figure 2 : Annual Scientific Production**




Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

The annual scientific output on digital maturity in the public sector shows an emerging phase with low and irregular activity between 2006 and 2014 ( often 0-3 publication/year). A gradual recovery between 2015 and 2016 coincides with the dissemination of national digital transformation strategies and international assessment frameworks. The sharp acceleration observed after 2018, which is expected to peak at around 30 articles in 2023, reflects both the institutionalization of digital transformation as a governance priority and the operational urgency imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on governments digital capabilities. In general the period 2022-2025 corresponds to a phase of rapid expansion, with a marked jump in 2023, followed by a sustained high level and peak in 2025. This dynamic confirms that the topic has become a major area of research in recent years, likely driven by the widespread adoption of digital transformation programs, digital government strategies, and, more recently, the integration of data/AI capabilities into public policy.

**Figure 3 : Most relevant sources**




***Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix***

Seven articles each come from Government Information Quarterly (GIQ) and Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy, the two most represented outlets, followed by Administrative Sciences (six), and two specialist e-government journals with four articles each. With 135 articles distributed across 97 sources, the field exhibits extreme publication dispersion, a ratio of approximately 1.4 articles per source, consistent with Bradford's law pattern for a pre-consideration field. The co-dominance of GIQ and Transforming Government reflects the field's dual epistemic location in rigorous research on e-government and governance transformation related to practice, suggesting that two communities are not yet fully integrated.

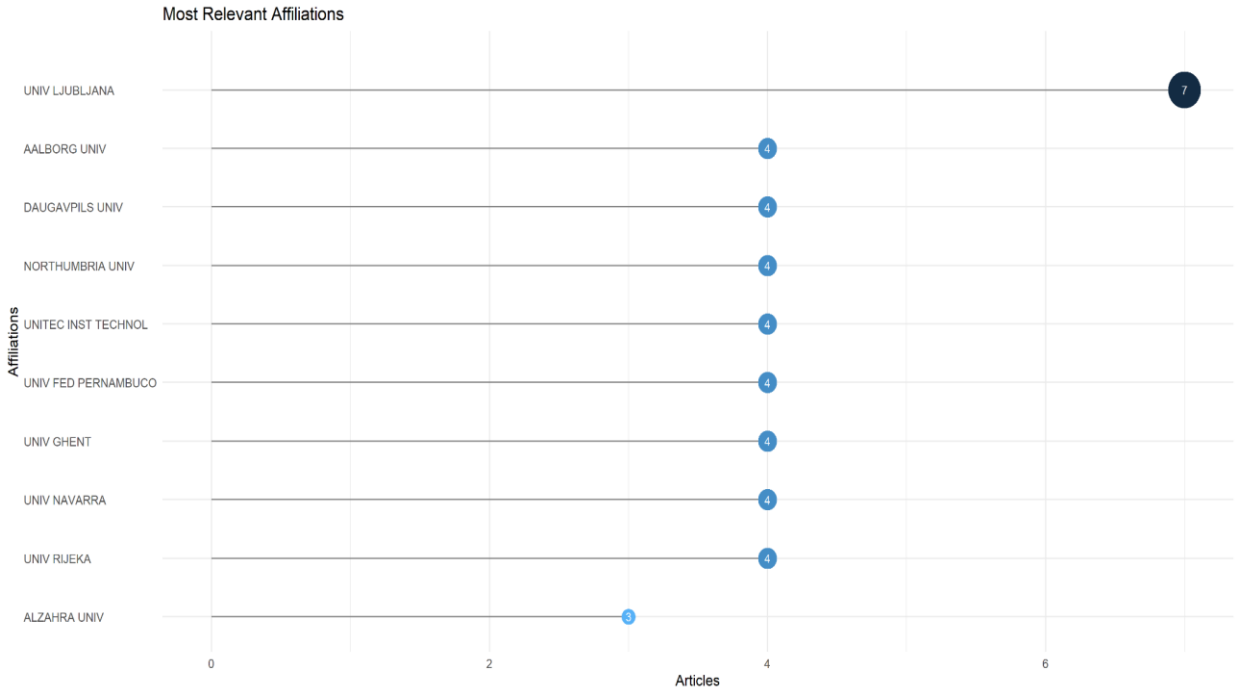
**Figure 4 : Most relevant Authors**

| Author | Articles | Articles Fractionalized |
|---|---|---|
| ANDERSEN K | 3 | 1.03 |
| HENRIKSEN H | 3 | 1.03 |
| ALACH Z | 2 | 2.00 |
| ANDRONICEANU A | 2 | 1.00 |
| BENEDETTI M | 2 | 0.40 |
| COSTA A | 2 | 1.00 |
| DE L A | 2 | 1.00 |
| DECMAN M | 2 | 0.83 |
| GIMENEZ R | 2 | 0.67 |
| HERNANTES J | 2 | 0.67 |

Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

Author productivity is remarkably flat : Andersen K and Henriksen H share the top rank with only three articles each, while a second tier of eight scholars contributes two papers each. Fractionalized scores reveal important nuance, Alach Z's high score (2.00) indicates concentrated individual contribution, while Benedetti M's low score (0.40) reflects heavy collaborative authorship. No authors approached the productivity levels associated with leading scholars in mature subfields, confirming the absence of established research schools or dominant intellectual leaders. The Nordic presence of Andersen and Henriksen is notable, likely reflecting Scandinavia's advanced e-government practices and strong tradition of public administration research.

**Figure 5 : Most Relevant affiliation**




Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

University of Ljubljana leads with seven articles, followed by a cluster of institutions (Aalborg University, Daugavpils University, Northumbria University, and others) each contributing four articles. The institutional landscape mirrors the author distribution : no institution has established a critical mass production constituting a recognised research center for digital maturity in the public sector.

**Table1 : Countries scientific production**

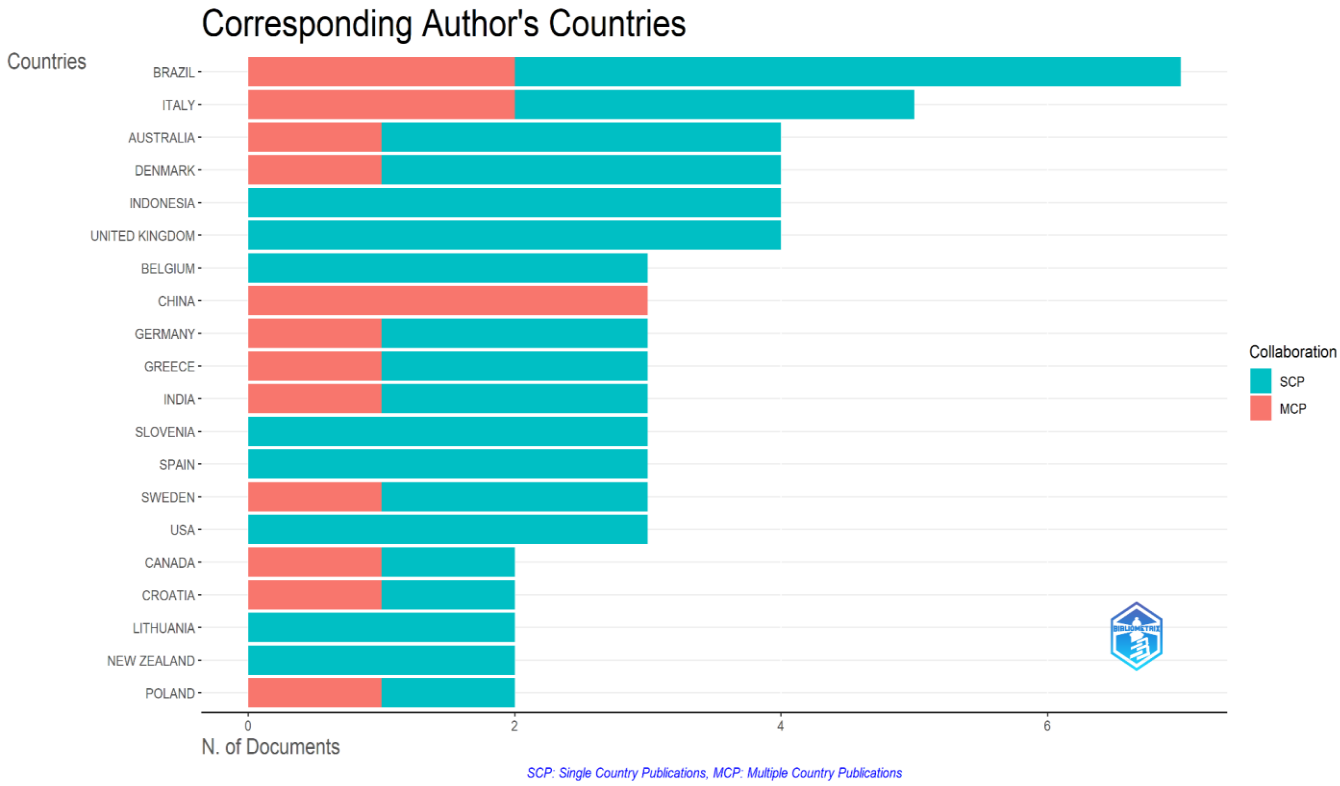
| Country | Freq |
|---|---|
| **BRAZIL** | **20** |
| **INDONESIA** | **17** |
| **UK** | **15** |
| **SPAIN** | **14** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **ITALY** | **13** |
| **CHINA** | **12** |
| **AUSTRALIA** | **11** |
| **DENMARK** | **10** |
| **GREECE** | **10** |
| **SWEDEN** | **10** |

Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

Country production is led by Brazil and Indonesia, followed by the UK, Spain and Italy, confirming an internationally distributed research output rather than a single region dominance.

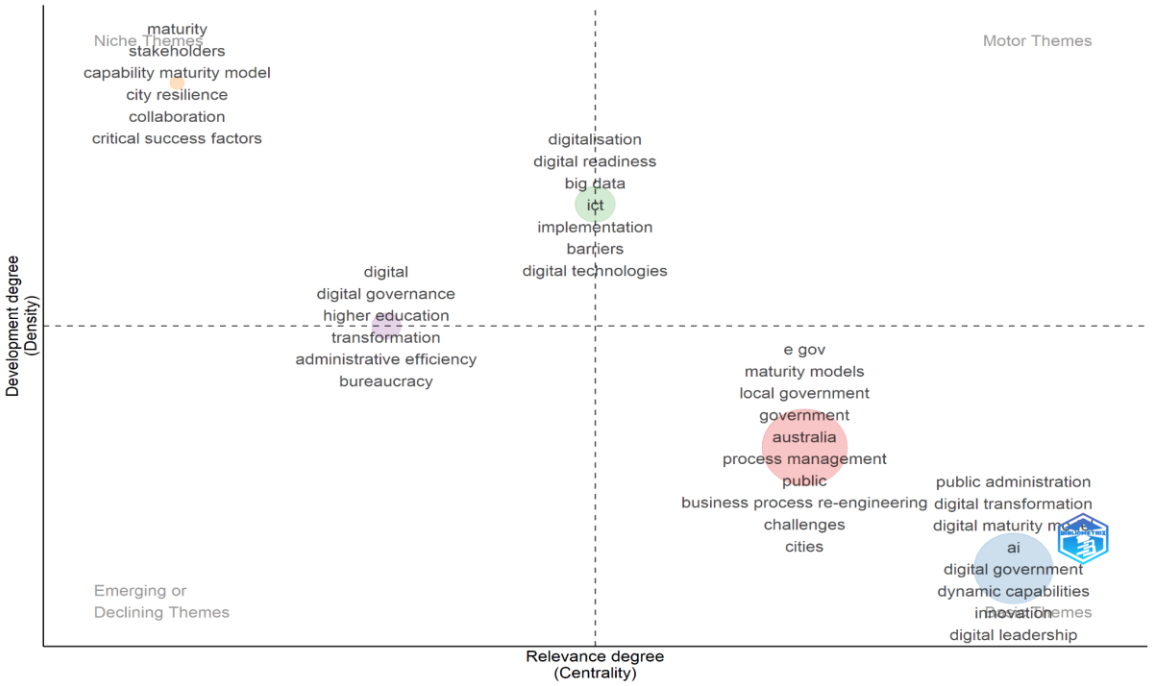
**Figure 6 : Corresponding Author's Countries**




Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

Corresponding author analysis (SCP vs MCP) highlights cross-country collaboration patterns. European countries, particularly Italy, Denmark and UK, show more visible MCP (Multiple Country Publication) shares, reflecting international co-authorship networks.

**Figure 7 : Thematic Map**

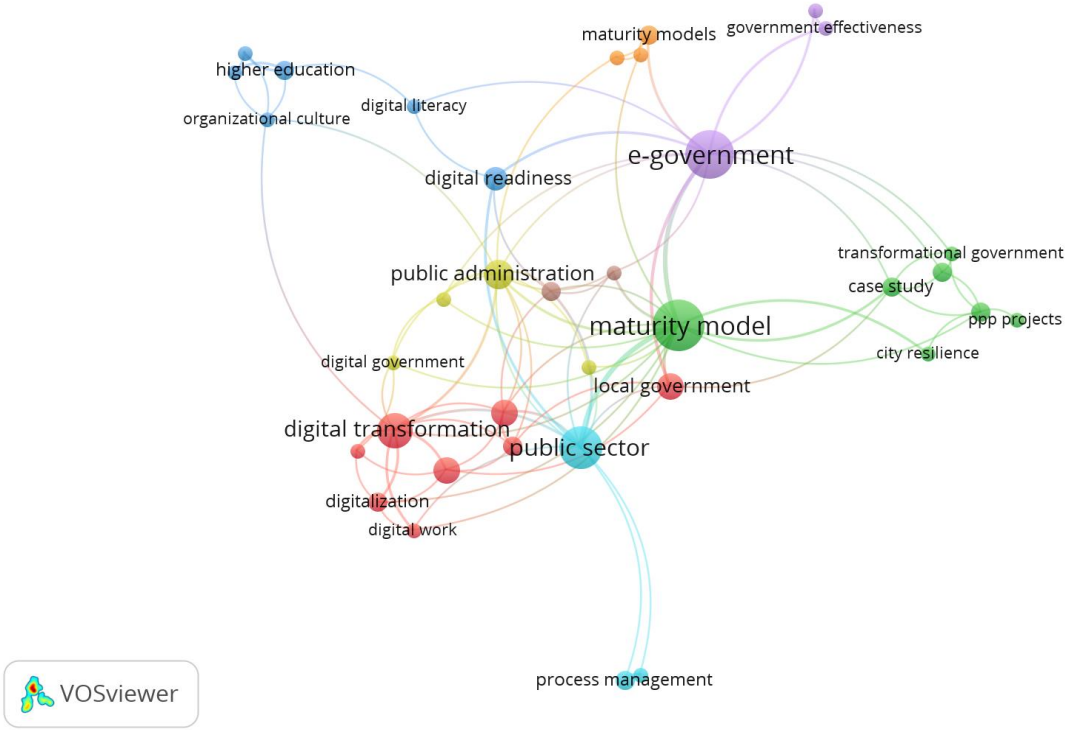



Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

The thematic map reveals four structural quadrants :

- Motor themes : maturity models, process management, capability maturity model, city resilience, stakeholder engagement and collaboration,etc, represent the field's most developed and actionable research programme, combining high internal cohesion with structural centrality.
- Basic themes: public administration, digital transformation, digital maturity model, digital readiness, AI, dynamic capabilities, digital government and digital leadership. They constitute the conceptual spine, with highly cross cutting but not yet internally consolidated around canonical dimensions or measurement standards.
- Niches themes: digital governance, administrative efficiency,etc, are internally coherent but insufficiently connected to the broader discourse, despite their operational centrality.
- Emerging/ declining themes: e-government maturity model, e-maturity, e-services, capture the transactional vocabulary of legacy e-government research yielding to newer digital maturity framing . Abridging clusters centred on e-gov, local government, process management, and cities serves as the conceptual pivot between these traditions.

**Figure 8 : keyword network**




Source : developed by us on VOSviewer

Figure 8 groups keywords into thematic areas. Node size indicates how often a keyword occurs, and links connect keywords that appear together in the same documents.

- Core concepts and key terms:

The terms “maturity model” and “e-government” occupy a central position, indicating that they form the backbone of the field, maturity is mainly addressed as a framework for assessing and diagnosing the digital transformation of public organizations, strongly associated with e-government initiatives. The proximity of “public sector”, “public administration”, and “ local government” suggests that analysis is particularly rooted in administrations, especially local ones, where maturity is often measured by the ability to deploy digital services and transform processes.

- Thematics clusters

- **“ Digital transformation/ digitalization” cluster :** the coexistence of digital transformation, digitalisation and digital work reflects a focus on organizational change, the transformation of working practices, and digital modernization.
- “ Maturity model/local government

- **Cluster “ Transformational government/ PPP projects/ case study :** the presence of case study and PPP projects signals a more applied orientation, focused on implementation cases, project setups, and transformation trajectories.

- **Cluster " Digital readiness/ organisational culture/ higher education" :** this cluster suggests that the maturity is frequently linked to human and organizational determinants (culture, skills, readiness), confirming that the field is not limited to digital infrastructure but also includes socio-organisational dimensions.

In summary, the entire network indicates literature structured around a triptych: maturity models ( diagnosis and measurement), digital transformation and e-government( implementation and innovation), organizational context and adoption capacity ( readiness, culture and skills). This configuration supports the idea that "digital maturity" in the public sector is treated as a composite organizational capability, requiring governance, process transformation, and skills.

**Table 2 : most influential document**

| Paper | DOI | Total Citations | TC per Year |
|---|---|---|---|
| ANDERSEN KV, 2006, Gov. Inf. Q. | 10.1016/j.giq.2005.11.008 | 374 | 17,81 |
| DE SOUSA WG, 2019, Gov. Inf. Q. | 10.1016/j.giq.2019.07.004 | 274 | 34,25 |
| FLECHSIG C, 2022, J. Purch. Supply Manag. | 10.1016/j.pursup.2021.100718 | 103 | 20,60 |
| SECUNDO G, 2015, J. Intellect. Cap. | 10.1108/JIC-06-2014-0072 | 98 | 8,17 |
| TANGI L, 2020, Electron. Gov. | 10.1007/978-3-030-57599-1_4 | 57 | 8,14 |
| ANANTATMULA VS, 2018, Eng. Manag. J. | 10.1080/10429247.2018.1458208 | 54 | 6,00 |
| ANDERSEN KN, 2011, Gov. Inf. Q. | 10.1016/j.giq.2010.12.006 | 51 | 3,19 |
| ARAS A, 2023, SYSTEMS | 10.3390/systems11040213 | 45 | 11,25 |
| GIMENEZ R, 2017, Technol. Forecast. Soc. Chang. | 10.1016/j.techfore.2016.08.001 | 40 | 4,00 |
| NAM T, 2019, J. Glob. Inf. Manag. | 10.4018/JGIM.2019070107 | 32 | 4,00 |

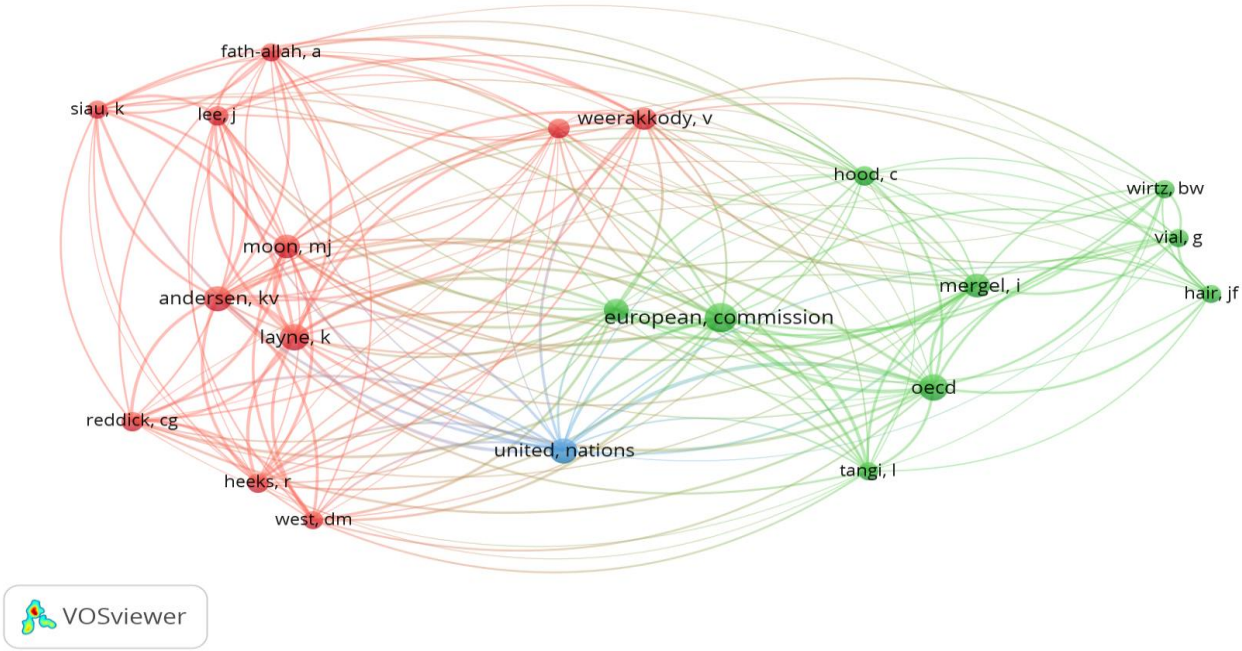
Source : developed by us on Bibliometrix

The distribution of overall citations highlights a strong concentration of influence around a few seminal contributions. Two publications stand out clearly: Andersen (2006, Government Information Quarterly) with a total of 374 citations ( 17.81/year), followed by De Sousa ( 2019, Government Information Quarterly) with 274 citations (34.25/year). This contrast suggests the existence of a theoretical and methodological foundation that is widely used in the field of digital maturity and e-government, with a more recent rise in the number of works published in the late 2010s.

A second level of influence appears with articles around 100 citations (e.g., Flechsig, 2022; Segundo, 2015), reflecting the emergence of more specialized contributions (governance, public procurement and management, organizational capabilities).

Finally, a set of follow up works ( ≈ 30-60 citations) consolidates the field on operational themes such as digital maturity, digital transformation, digital governance, and the integration of technologies such as AI and big data, confirming a gradual shift towards issues of implementation and public performance.

**Figure 9 :Co-citation network of cited authors in public sector digital maturity research (minimum citations = 10).**




Source : developed by us on VOSviewer

The co-citation network of the authors cited highlights a clear structure in the intellectual basis of the field of " digital maturity/ e-government in the public sector." By setting a threshold of 10 citations, the map identifies the most frequently cited authors and reveals a relatively dense network ( 176 links) with high cohesion ( Total Link Strength = 861), suggesting the existence of a shared conceptual foundation and frequently cited references.

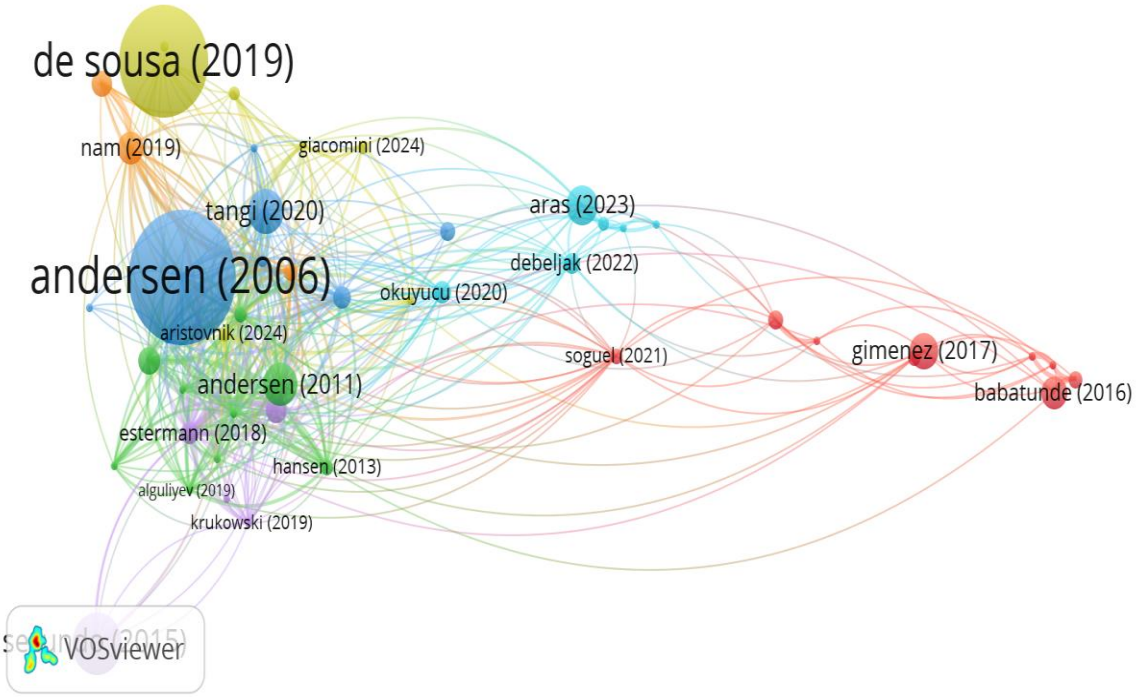
The clustering algorithm identifies three distinct clusters, corresponding to knowledge communities that are co-constructed through co-referencing:

**1- " E-government/ digital transformation" cluster red:** this cluster brings together highly co-cited authors associated with work on digital transformation, e-government, and the adoption of technologies in public action. The density of inta-cluster links indicates convergence around common interpretative frameworks (maturity, transformation, digital capabilities, digital governance).

**2- Cluster "public governance, policies, and institutional frameworks' (green) :** this cluster brings together references related to public policy instruments, governance approaches, and evaluation frameworks promoted by international institutions, illustrating that the literature draws not only on academic contributions but also on normative frameworks and recommendations, particularly in the context of digital maturity assessments

**3-Cluster " development, standards and international agendas" ( blue):** smaller in size, this cluster reflects the activation of cross-cutting references relating to global frameworks, indicators, and international agendas, acting as a bridge between the two previous clusters.

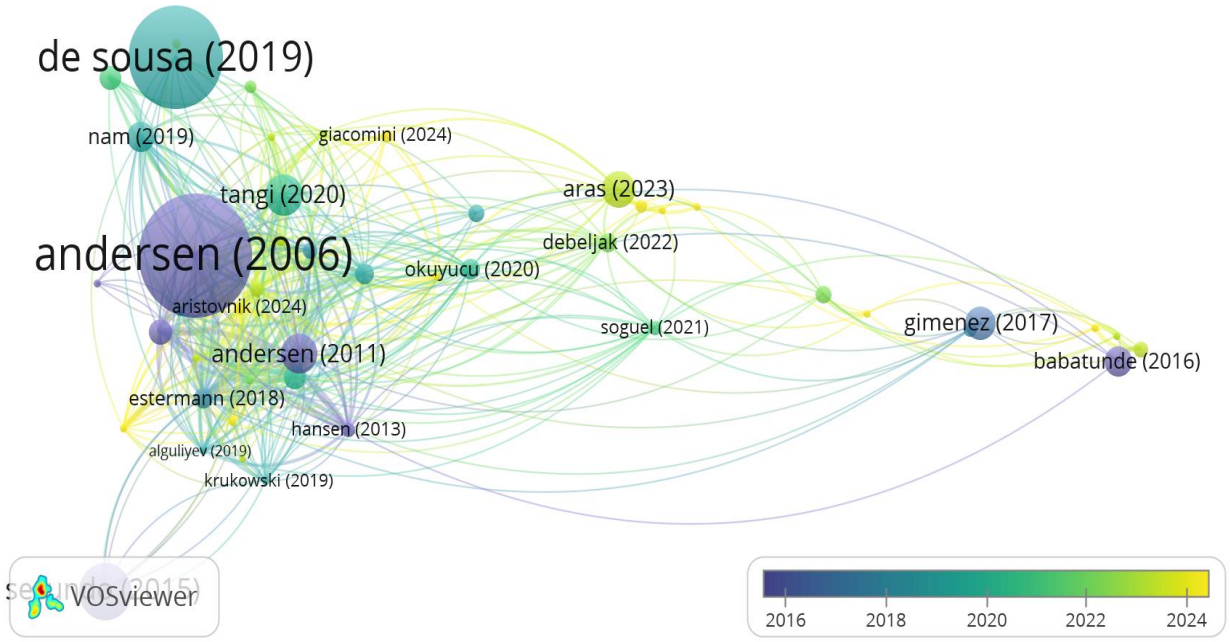
**Figure 10 :Bibliographic coupling network of documents on public sector digital maturity**




Source : developed by us on VOSviewer

The bibliographic coupling network highlights the frontiers of research on digital maturity in the public sector. After applying a threshold and selecting the most coupled document (i.e., those sharing the most references), the map reveals a structuring core dominated by Andersen (2006) and De sousa (2019), who play a role as bibliographic pivots around which more recent contributions are grouped (e.g, Aras 2023, Debeljàk 2022, Giacomini 2024, Aristovnik 2024). The presence of a more peripheral subset (e.g, Gimenez 2017, Babatunde 2016) suggests a more specialized front, connected to the core by less dense bibliographic bridges. Overall, the structure confirms a cumulative and convergent field, organized around assessment frameworks ( maturity/ readiness) and digital transformation of public administrations, with more sector-specific applications.

**Figure 11 : Overlay visualization of the bibliographic coupling network**




Source : developed by us on VOSviewer

This overlay visualization (color-coded by average year of publication) highlights the temporal dynamics of research fronts on digital maturity in the public sector.

- **An "older" structural foundation (2016- 2019)**

The "colder" nodes ( purple/ blue, 2016-2019), such as Babatunde (2016), Jimenez (2017), Estermann (2018), and De Soussa (2019), correspond to a foundation that has helped establish reference frameworks ( digital transformation, governance, evaluation/ measurement, public performance). They remain strongly connected, indicating that they continue to be mobilized by recent work through the sharing references.

- **A sharp increase in recent work (2022-2024)**

The "hottest" nodes (green/ yellow, 2033-2024), notably Debeljàk (2022), Aras (2023), and Giacomini (2024) as well as Aristovnik (2024), appear to be recent contributions that cluster around the central core. This suggests a phase of acceleration in scientific production and an intensification of work on maturity/readiness, digital governance and the organizational and managerial capacities necessary for transformation in public administration.

- **An intertemporal pivot**

The maintenance of a highly central pivot node (Andersen 2006, then Andersen 2011) at the heart of the network, despite its age, shows that the field remains cumulative : recent literature continues to rely on a solid methodological and evaluative framework ( capacity assessment, maturity models, indicators).

**4-Discussion**

Research on digital maturity in the public sector has grown rapidly but unevenly. For nearly a decade after 2006, very little was published on the topic. Output began rising around 2015, when governments started developing national digital strategies and international organisations began pushing for standardised ways to measure digital progress. After 2018, growth accelerated sharply, and partly because the COVID-19 pandemic forced governments to confront their digital weakness in real time. Today, the field is active and expanding, but it still lacks the shared standards, leading journals, and established research communities that characterise a mature discipline.

The geography of the field is revealing. Countries such as Brazil and Indonesia produce the largest number of publications, mainly because their governments require formal assessments of digital maturity as part of national e-government programs. However, these publications tend to remain within national borders, researchers in these countries rarely collaborate internationally, and their findings rarely feed into broader theoretical debates. At the same time, intellectual influence is concentrated in a small number of European institutions and, above all, in a single leading journal that links the three parent disciplines of the field (information systems, public administration and organizational management). This gap between those who produce the most and those who shape theory is a structural weakness that the field must address.

Conceptually, the literature is organized around three related but insufficiently interconnected stands. The most developed concerns maturity models themselves, i.e., how to measure and assess governments' digital capabilities. A second, broader stand covers digital capacity. A third, narrower stand deals with effective implementation: how does change happen in practice and what public value does it create? The main problem is that these stands rarely communicate with each other. Maturity modeling and digital governance research, in particular, operate in parallel rather than complementing each other, even though they address the same organizational challenges from complementary angles.

The intellectual foundations of the field are stable, based on a small number of landmark studies that defined how to conceptualize and measure e-government maturity. More recent research is moving toward dynamic approaches, incorporating artificial intelligence,cross-

country comparisons, and governance capabilities, but these new directions have not yet led to the creation of the integrative frameworks needed to reshape the field.

The research gaps stand out. First, the field needs better measurement tools, validated frameworks that go beyond technical infrastructure to capture data governance, interoperability, cybersecurity, and citizen experience, tested over time rather than in one-off snapshots. Second, governance arrangements and digital leadership need to be treated as core dimensions of maturity, not simply as background conditions, which requires new theoretical and empirical work. Third, research connecting maturity levels to actual public service outcomes, especially at local government level and in lower income countries is largely missing despite its obvious practical importance.

Two limitations should be noted. Coverage is restricted to Scopus and the Web of Science and to English and French language publications, so practitioner knowledge and work in other languages, including from the most productive countries, are probably under-represented. Bibliometric indicators also describe publication patterns rather than quality of the work. Within these limits, the results offer a solid basis for setting a research agenda.

## 5-Conclusion

This paper charted research on digital maturity in the public sector from 2006 to 2026. By combining performance analysis, thematic mapping, co-citation analysis, and bibliography coupling, it offers a structured and reproducible portrait of a field that is growing rapidly but remains intellectually fragmented.

The findings highlight the absence of a consolidated theoretical framework, the isolation of the maturity construct from broader digital transformation discourse, and the limited international collaboration across the field's most active contributors. These structural weaknesses point to clear directions for future scholarship, particularly regarding the integration of dynamic capabilities theory, AI enabled assessment approaches, and comparative cross-country research.

The contribution is twofold: a bibliometric map of digital maturity research focused on the public sector, and a structured research agenda for scholars and practitioners.

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