Enhancing Municipal Resilience through Digital Governance: Empirical Insights from Lithuanian Municipalities

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Abstract: Local governments are increasingly exposed to uncertainties and disruptions, which heighten the need to strengthen municipal resilience. Recent studies (Park, Choi, 2023; Horák, Špaček, 2024) identify digital governance as a crucial enabler of such resilience. The digitalisation of local public administration – through the systematic integration of digital technologies into governance processes – enhances organisational adaptability, transparency, and public service delivery. In doing so, it strengthens municipal capacity to anticipate, withstand, and recover from crises (Lee-Geiller, Lee, 2022; Idzi, Gomes, 2022). During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, municipalities sought to improve their responsiveness and adaptive capacity through advanced digital tools, enabling them to manage emerging challenges, maintain essential public services, and sustain public trust (Spicer et al., 2023; Nolte, Lindenmeier, 2024; Ansell, Torfing, 2025). However, despite growing scholarly and practical interest in the concept of digital maturity in the public sector, limited empirical research has examined how digital governance mechanisms interact with institutional strategy, employees and processes to shape municipal resilience at the local government.

The aim of this research is to explore how municipalities strengthen their resilience by developing and enabling digital governance systems and tools. The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods approach and techniques. Empirical data were collected through a survey of all 60 Lithuanian municipalities, gathering assessments from local government representatives on the current state of digital governance within their municipalities. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with municipal representatives to gain deeper insights into local practices, challenges, and approaches.

The main contribution and novelty of this research lie in advancing understanding of the relationship between municipal resilience and digital governance. The findings reveal how digital governance enhances capacities to anticipate, withstand, and recover from crises at the local level and identify the main activities undertaken by municipalities to strengthen resilience within contexts of crisis and uncertainty.