

Study on Organizational Digital Readiness and AI-Driven Business Process Automation in European Home Care Services

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Abstract

The rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming business process management across industries, including healthcare. In European home care services, AI-driven process automation promises improved efficiency, enhanced documentation quality, and optimized resource allocation in response to demographic aging and workforce shortages. However, despite increasing technological availability, AI adoption remains fragmented and uneven across organizations and countries. Existing research largely focuses on technological capabilities or regulatory barriers, while insufficient attention has been given to the organizational preconditions required for effective AI integration. This conceptual and theory-driven paper develops a multidimensional framework of organizational digital readiness as a key driver of AI adoption in European home care organizations. Drawing on an integrative review of literature on business process management, technology adoption, and capability-based perspectives, it defines digital readiness through five dimensions: technological infrastructure, process integration, data governance, workforce digital skills, and AI-specific capabilities. It also proposes links between digital readiness and AI adoption outcomes, considering the influence of regulatory environments.

The study contributes to the literature by shifting the focus from technology availability to organizational capabilities in digital transformation. The framework offers a basis for future empirical validation and provides practical insights for managers and policymakers to support sustainable, AI-driven transformation in home care systems.

Keywords

Digital readiness; artificial intelligence; business process management; home care services; healthcare digitalization

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming business process management in healthcare, with particularly significant implications for European home care services. AI-driven technologies such as remote monitoring, decision-support systems, and predictive analytics offer considerable potential to improve efficiency, enhance documentation quality, and optimize resource allocation in response to demographic aging and workforce shortages (Cingolani et al., 2023).

Despite these opportunities, the adoption of digital technologies in healthcare remains fragmented and uneven. Empirical evidence shows that while digital tools can improve care processes, their implementation is often inconsistent across organizations (Krick et al., 2019). This fragmentation is also reflected in the healthcare workforce, where substantial differences in digital competencies persist across European

countries (Wells et al., 2025). In addition, structural factors such as economic resources and demographic conditions contribute to unequal levels of digitalization across healthcare systems (Antonicelli et al., 2023).

Existing research has largely focused on the effectiveness, acceptance, and technological capabilities of digital health solutions (Abdi et al., 2018; Bächle et al., 2018). However, these studies consistently highlight a gap between technological availability and actual implementation. Recent evidence suggests that digital readiness in healthcare is a multidimensional construct encompassing technological infrastructure, workforce capabilities, governance structures, and organizational processes (Alotaibi et al., 2025). Yet, the role of these organizational capabilities in enabling AI-driven process automation remains insufficiently understood. At the same time, the European healthcare landscape is shaped by a complex regulatory environment. Initiatives such as the European Health Data Space aim to enhance interoperability and data accessibility while ensuring compliance with strict data protection requirements (Lekatis & Cyber Risk GmbH, n.d.). These developments create both opportunities and additional challenges for healthcare organizations.

Against this background, this paper develops a multidimensional conceptual framework of organizational digital readiness as a determinant of AI-driven business process automation in European home care services. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 1 reviews the relevant literature, Section 2 outlines the conceptual research methodology, and Section 3 presents the proposed framework, propositions, and discussion, followed by the conclusion.

1. Review of the scientific literature

1.1. AI-driven business process automation in healthcare

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly recognized as a key driver of business process transformation in healthcare. Unlike traditional digital technologies, AI enables not only the support but also the automation and redesign of clinical and administrative processes, thereby fundamentally changing how healthcare services are delivered (Blaß et al., 2024). In this context, AI-driven business process automation refers to the integration of intelligent systems into workflows to improve efficiency, decision-making, and service quality. AI applications in healthcare can be categorized into different service types, including decision-support systems, monitoring and predictive analytics, process automation tools, and patient interaction technologies (Blaß et al., 2024). In home care settings, these applications are particularly relevant, as they enable continuous monitoring, real-time data analysis, and more efficient allocation of care resources (Cingolani et al., 2023). Such developments support a shift from reactive to more proactive and data-driven care processes. However, despite the availability of these technologies, their implementation remains limited and uneven. Studies show that AI-based solutions are often confined to pilot projects and are rarely fully integrated into routine care processes (Abdi et al., 2018; Gjellebæk et al., 2020). This indicates that technological innovation alone is insufficient to achieve widespread transformation.

A key challenge lies in the organizational complexity of healthcare systems. The integration of AI requires changes in workflows, roles, and decision-making structures, which can lead to resistance and require new competencies among healthcare professionals (Gjellebæk et al., 2020). Furthermore, existing research has primarily focused on the effectiveness and acceptance of digital technologies rather than their integration into organizational processes (Krick et al., 2019). Taken together, prior research indicates that AI-driven business process automation in healthcare is not solely a technological issue but a complex organizational transformation process. This underscores the need to systematically examine the organizational conditions that enable the effective adoption and integration of AI technologies.

1.2. Organizational digital readiness as a multidimensional construct

Organizational digital readiness has emerged as a critical determinant of successful digital transformation in healthcare. Rather than representing a single capability, digital readiness is increasingly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing technological, organizational, and human factors that collectively enable the adoption and effective use of digital technologies (Alotaibi et al., 2025). This perspective reflects a shift from technology-centric approaches toward a more holistic understanding of organizational capabilities required for digital innovation. Recent systematic evidence highlights that digital readiness in healthcare depends on several interrelated dimensions, including the availability of technological infrastructure, the level of workforce digital competence, the existence of supportive governance structures, and the integration of digital tools into organizational processes (Alotaibi et al., 2025). These dimensions must be actively developed, as digital readiness does not emerge automatically but requires targeted organizational interventions such as training, leadership support, and strategic alignment.

In line with these perspectives, recent research has further structured organizational digital readiness into a set of key dimensions that reflect the complexity of digital transformation processes. A comprehensive digital readiness model identifies multiple interrelated dimensions, including technological infrastructure, digital skills and competencies, data capabilities, organizational culture, governance structures, and process optimization, which together form an integrated capability system (Salamzadeh et al., 2026). Building in this, these dimensions can be conceptually grouped into broader categories of digital readiness. Resource readiness refers to the availability of financial, technological, and human resources necessary to support digital transformation initiatives. Digital capabilities and competencies capture the organization's ability to effectively utilize digital technologies and develop relevant skills. Strategy and governance define the strategic direction, leadership commitment, and regulatory alignment required to guide digital initiatives. Organizational culture and change management reflect the organization's ability to foster openness toward innovation and manage transformation processes. Finally, operational processes describe the degree to which workflows are standardized, integrated, and adaptable to digital technologies.

Prior research on e-health readiness emphasizes that successful digital transformation depends not only on technical infrastructure but also on the willingness and ability of healthcare professionals to adapt to new technologies and workflows (Kruszyńska-Fischbach et al., 2022). At the same time, empirical studies indicate that insufficient digital readiness remains a major barrier to the effective implementation of digital technologies in healthcare. Persistent challenges include limited digital competencies among healthcare staff, inadequate IT infrastructure, and the lack of standardized and integrated processes (Krick et al., 2019; Wells et al., 2025). These barriers contribute to the well-documented gap between the availability of digital technologies and their actual use in practice (Bächle et al., 2018). In addition, the increasing use of data-driven and AI-based technologies introduces new requirements related to data governance, interoperability, and regulatory compliance. European initiatives such as the European Health Data Space highlight the growing importance of secure data sharing, standardized infrastructures, and cross-organizational integration as key enablers of digital health transformation (Lekatis & Cyber Risk GmbH., n.d.). These developments further expand the scope of digital readiness beyond internal organizational factors to include compliance with external regulatory frameworks.

Digital readiness is increasingly understood as a multidimensional construct comprising organizational, technological, and human factors, including leadership, processes, skills, and data capabilities (Salamzadeh et al., 2026). In this context, the effective use of digital technologies depends both on the perception of their value and the capability to apply them in practice (Nasution et al., 2018). Existing frameworks further structure digital transformation into core organizational domains. The “four pillars” model distinguishes between IT uplift, digitizing operations, digital marketing, and new ventures as key transformation areas. At the same time, these dimensions highlight that digital transformation extends beyond technology to include organizational and human factors, particularly learning and training capabilities. This is especially relevant for SMEs, which require flexible, resource-efficient approaches adapted to their specific organizational constraints and maturity levels (Oliveri et al., 2023).

1.3. European regulatory and institutional context

The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies in European healthcare is strongly shaped by a complex regulatory and institutional environment. Unlike more market-driven systems, European healthcare systems are characterized by a high degree of regulation, public governance, and strong emphasis on data protection and ethical standards. These factors significantly influence how digital innovations, including AI-driven process automation, can be implemented in practice. At the European level, strategic initiatives promote healthcare digitalization while ensuring interoperability, security, and trust. In particular, the European Health Data Space (EHDS) aims to facilitate the secure exchange and use of health data across member states, thereby enabling more integrated and data-driven care models (Lekatis & Cyber Risk GmbH., n.d.). By establishing common standards for data access and interoperability, the EHDS is expected to play a central role in supporting AI applications that rely on large-scale and high-quality datasets. In parallel, European policy frameworks on artificial intelligence emphasize the need to balance innovation with ethical and legal considerations. AI in healthcare is subject to strict requirements related to data privacy, transparency, accountability, and patient safety. This is reflected in European policy initiatives promoting trustworthy AI and regulatory oversight in healthcare (European Commission, n.d.). While these regulations create important safeguards, they also increase the complexity of implementing AI-based solutions, particularly for smaller healthcare providers with limited resources.

At the same time, empirical evidence highlights substantial variation in the level of digitalization across European healthcare systems. Differences in economic resources, demographic structures, and institutional capacities contribute to uneven adoption of digital technologies and AI across regions and organizations (Antonicelli et al., 2023). This fragmentation is further reinforced by disparities in workforce capabilities

and organizational readiness, which affect the ability of healthcare providers to comply with regulatory requirements and to integrate digital solutions effectively.

These dynamics suggest that the European regulatory and institutional context acts both as an enabler and a constraint for AI-driven transformation. While EU-level initiatives support standardization, interoperability, and innovation, regulatory complexity and structural heterogeneity create additional implementation challenges. Consequently, the adoption of AI-driven business process automation in European home care services must be understood within a broader institutional context influencing both digital readiness and AI adoption outcomes. In addition to general regulatory considerations, the European healthcare context is increasingly shaped by the practical deployment of specific AI applications in home care settings. These include predictive health monitoring systems that enable early detection of health deterioration, AI-based virtual caregivers supporting patient interaction and communication, and digital care navigation and scheduling tools that optimize the coordination of care service. Furthermore, service and social robotics are being introduced to assist elderly patients in daily activities, while AI-driven pain identification systems support clinical assessment, particularly in cases where patients are unable to communicate effectively (European Commission, n.d.). At the policy level, the European Union actively promotes and regulates the development of such technologies through a combination of strategic initiatives and legal frameworks. The Artificial Intelligence Act establishes a risk-based regulatory approach, classifying many healthcare applications as high-risk and imposing strict requirements regarding safety, transparency, and accountability. In parallel, large-scale innovation initiatives such as the GATEKEEPER project aim to accelerate the adoption of AI-enabled digital health solutions by connecting healthcare providers, technology developers, and public institutions across Europe (European Commission, n.d.).

2. Research methodology

This conceptual and theory-driven study adopts a conceptual research design aimed at developing a theoretically grounded framework of organizational digital readiness as a determinant of AI-driven business process automation in European home care services. Given the exploratory nature of the research problem and the limited integration of existing literature across domains, a theory-driven approach is considered appropriate. The paper builds on a systematic and integrative theoretical review of the literature, synthesizing insights from multiple research streams, including business process management, digital transformation in healthcare, technology adoption, and organizational capability theory. In particular, prior studies on digital readiness in healthcare (Alotaibi et al., 2025; Kruszyńska-Fischbach et al., 2022), AI-based healthcare services (Blaß et al., 2024), and digital transformation challenges in care contexts (Cingolani et al., 2023; Gjellebæk et al., 2020) are combined to develop a multidimensional conceptualization of organizational readiness (Table no. 1).

Table no. 1. Summarizing selected studies relevant to the topic

No	Author(s)	Year	Title	Key Findings
1	Gjellebæk et al.	2020	Management challenges for future digitalization of healthcare services	Digital health adoption requires organizational transformation, not mere technology implementation.
2	Kruszyńska-Fischbach et al.	2022	Organizational e-Health Readiness: How to Prepare the Primary Healthcare Providers' Services for Digital Transformation	Organizational e-health readiness is a multidimensional system of interdependent capabilities.
3	Cingolani et al.	2023	Artificial intelligence and digital medicine for integrated home care services in Italy: Opportunities and limits	AI implementation depends on data infrastructure, digital skills, and regulatory frameworks.
4	Blaß et al.	2024	A Taxonomy and Archetypes of AI-Based Health Care Services: Qualitative Study	AI healthcare services are multidimensional systems integrating actors, data, and AI capabilities.
5	Alotaibi et al.	2025	Enhancing digital readiness and capability in healthcare: a systematic review of interventions, barriers, and facilitators	Digital readiness depends on user expectations, ease of use, organizational support, and social influence.

Source: own presentation

The methodological approach follows a conceptual framework development logic, in which key constructs are identified, defined, and systematically related based on existing theoretical and empirical evidence. This involves three main steps: (1) identification of relevant dimensions of digital readiness based on prior research; (2) integration of these dimensions into a coherent framework linked to AI-driven process

automation; and (3) formulation of theoretical propositions that describe the relationships between organizational readiness and AI adoption outcomes. Furthermore, the analysis explicitly considers the European regulatory and institutional context as a moderating factor influencing these relationships. This contextualization is based on existing policy frameworks and empirical studies highlighting structural differences across European healthcare systems. As a conceptual contribution, the proposed framework provides a foundation for future empirical validation, particularly through Delphi-based expert assessments and cross-country quantitative studies, as outlined in the research agenda.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Proposed conceptual framework

Building on the preceding literature review, this study proposes a conceptual framework that positions organizational digital readiness as a key determinant of AI-driven business process automation in European home care services. The framework integrates insights from digital readiness, AI-based healthcare services, and organizational transformation to explain how internal capabilities influence AI adoption and integration..

At its core, the framework assumes that AI-driven process automation is not solely dependent on the availability of technology but is primarily shaped by the level of organizational preparedness. While prior studies have demonstrated the transformative potential of AI in healthcare processes (Blaß et al., 2024; Cingolani et al., 2023), they also highlight persistent challenges in implementation, indicating that technological innovation alone is insufficient. In line with recent research, this paper conceptualizes digital readiness as a multidimensional organizational capability integrating technology, processes, data, and human resources (Alotaibi et al., 2025; Kruszyńska-Fischbach et al., 2022).

The proposed framework consists of five interrelated dimensions of organizational digital readiness: technological infrastructure maturity, process integration and standardization, data governance and regulatory compliance capability, workforce digital competence, and AI-specific organizational capability. These dimensions jointly determine an organization's ability to scale AI-driven process automation. Furthermore, the framework incorporates the European regulatory and institutional context as a moderating factor. Regulatory requirements, data protection standards, and structural differences across healthcare systems influence both the development of digital readiness and its impact on AI adoption (Antonicelli et al., 2023; Lekatis & Cyber Risk GmbH., n.d.). As a result, the relationship between organizational readiness and AI-driven transformation is expected to vary across national and regional contexts. Overall, the framework provides a structured explanation of how organizational capabilities and external conditions interact to shape AI adoption outcomes. By linking digital readiness to business process automation, the model contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of digital transformation in European home care services and establishes a foundation for the development of testable propositions. The framework thus extends existing research by explicitly linking organizational capability structures to AI-driven process automation outcomes in home care settings.

3.2 Dimensions of Organizational Digital Readiness

Building on the proposed framework, organizational digital readiness is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising five interrelated dimensions that collectively enable the adoption and effective integration of AI-driven business process automation in home care services (Figure no. 1).

(1) Technological infrastructure maturity: The first dimension refers to the availability, reliability, and interoperability of digital infrastructures within healthcare organizations. This includes electronic health records, data storage systems, and connectivity solutions that enable real-time data exchange. AI applications, particularly those based on predictive analytics and remote monitoring, require high-quality and continuous data flows, which depend on robust and integrated IT systems (Cingolani et al., 2023). Insufficient infrastructure remains a major barrier to digital transformation in healthcare (Alotaibi et al., 2025).

(2) Process integration and standardization: AI-driven automation requires well-defined, standardized, and digitally supported processes. Fragmented and non-standardized workflows limit the ability to embed AI technologies into routine operations. Prior research highlights that digital transformation in healthcare is often constrained by a lack of process integration and coordination across organizational units (Gjellebæk et al., 2020). Therefore, process maturity is a critical prerequisite for scaling AI-based solutions beyond pilot implementations.

(3) Data governance and regulatory compliance capability: The increasing reliance on data-intensive AI systems necessitates strong capabilities in data governance, including data quality management, security, and regulatory compliance. In the European context, frameworks such as the European Health Data Space emphasize the importance of standardized data access, interoperability, and strict data protection requirements (Lekatis & Cyber Risk GmbH., n.d.). Organizations must be able to manage and share data securely while complying with regulatory standards, which adds complexity to AI implementation.

(4) Workforce digital competence: The successful adoption of AI technologies depends heavily on the digital skills and competencies of healthcare professionals. Empirical evidence shows significant variation in workforce readiness across European healthcare systems, with gaps in digital literacy and training limiting effective technology use (Wells et al., 2025). In addition to technical skills, the willingness to adopt new technologies and adapt to changing workflows plays a crucial role (Alotaibi et al., 2025).

(5) AI-specific organizational capability: Beyond general digital readiness, organizations require specific capabilities related to the understanding, implementation, and management of AI technologies. This includes the ability to evaluate AI applications, integrate them into decision-making processes, and ensure their ethical and effective use. Given the diversity of AI service types in healthcare, ranging from decision-support systems to process automation tools (Blaß et al., 2024), organizations must develop targeted competencies to manage these technologies appropriately.

Taken together, these five dimensions illustrate that digital readiness is not a single factor but a complex capability system. Only when these dimensions are sufficiently developed and aligned can healthcare organizations effectively adopt and scale AI-driven business process automation.

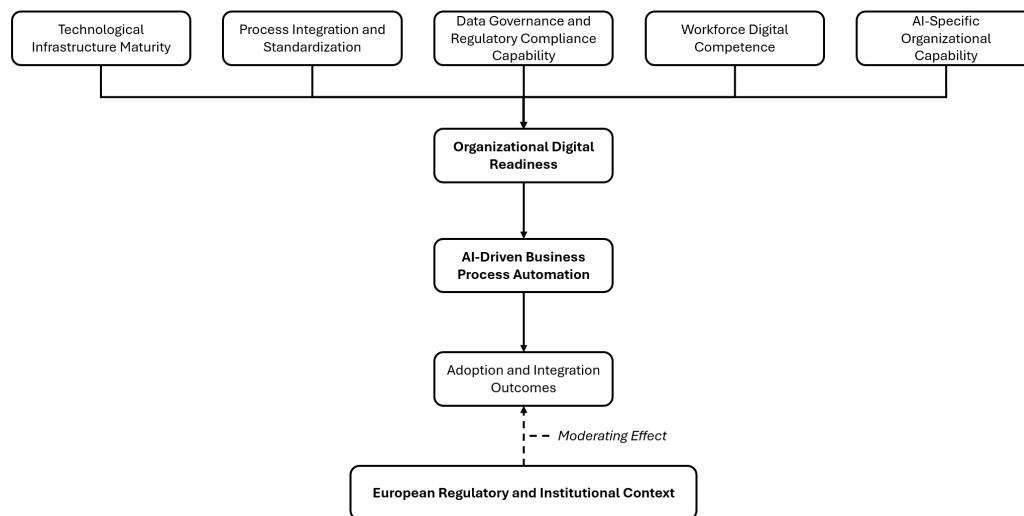


Figure no. 1. Dimensions of Organizational Digital Readiness in European Home Care Services

3.3. Propositions on AI Adoption

Based on the proposed conceptual framework, this study formulates a set of propositions that describe the relationship between organizational digital readiness and the adoption and integration of AI-driven business process automation in European home care services.

Proposition 1 (P1): Higher levels of organizational digital readiness positively influence the adoption and integration of AI-driven business process automation in home care organizations. This proposition reflects the core assumption that AI adoption is not primarily determined by technological availability but by the organization's ability to align infrastructure, processes, data, and human resources (Alotaibi et al., 2025). Prior research demonstrates that insufficient readiness constitutes a key barrier to the effective implementation of digital technologies in healthcare (Krick et al., 2019).

Proposition 2 (P2): Workforce digital competence positively moderates the relationship between technological infrastructure and AI adoption. Even in the presence of advanced technological infrastructure, the effective use of AI systems depends on the skills, knowledge, and acceptance of healthcare professionals. Empirical evidence highlights that disparities in digital competencies significantly influence technology utilization across European healthcare systems (Wells et al., 2025).

Proposition 3 (P3): Data governance and regulatory compliance capability positively influence the integration and scaling of AI-driven processes. AI applications rely on high-quality, interoperable, and securely managed data. In the European context, strict regulatory requirements increase the importance of organizational capabilities related to data governance and compliance, which are critical for enabling AI-based solutions (European Commission, n.d.).

Proposition 4 (P4): The relationship between organizational digital readiness and AI adoption is moderated by the European regulatory and institutional context. Structural differences in economic resources, demographic conditions, and institutional capacities across European regions influence both the development of digital readiness and its impact on AI adoption outcomes (Antonicelli et al., 2023).

Together, these propositions provide a theoretical basis for understanding how organizational capabilities and contextual factors jointly shape AI-driven transformation in home care services.

3.4. Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on digital transformation in healthcare by emphasizing organizational capability structures as central enablers of AI integration. While prior studies have primarily examined the effectiveness and acceptance of digital technologies, this paper highlights the critical role of organizational digital readiness as a multidimensional capability that enables the successful integration of AI-driven business process automation (Alotaibi et al., 2025; Blaß et al., 2024). The proposed framework advances existing literature by linking AI applications to organizational structures and processes, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of digital transformation in home care services. In particular, the integration of workforce competence, data governance, and process standardization offers a more nuanced perspective on why AI adoption remains uneven despite increasing technological availability. From a practical perspective, the results suggest that healthcare managers and policymakers should prioritize the systematic development of digital readiness rather than focusing solely on technology acquisition. Investments in infrastructure, workforce training, and governance structures are essential to enable sustainable and scalable AI implementation. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of the European regulatory context, which both supports and constrains digital innovation. Future research should empirically test the proposed framework across different national settings to better understand contextual variations in AI adoption.

Despite its theoretical contributions, this study is subject to several limitations. As a conceptual and theory-driven paper, the proposed framework has not yet been empirically validated. In addition, differences across European healthcare systems may limit the generalizability of the framework and its propositions. Future research should therefore empirically test and refine the proposed relationships across different national and organizational contexts.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine the role of organizational digital readiness in enabling AI-driven business process automation in European home care services. Building on a synthesis of literature from digital health, business process management, and organizational capability research, the study developed a multidimensional conceptual framework that explains how internal organizational capabilities influence AI adoption and integration outcomes. Digital readiness was conceptualized as a five-dimensional construct comprising technological infrastructure, process integration, data governance, workforce competence, and AI-specific capabilities. Together, these dimensions form the foundation for the effective adoption and scaling of AI-driven processes in home care settings. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of the European regulatory and institutional context, which shapes both the development of digital readiness and its impact on AI adoption. Regulatory frameworks, data protection requirements, and structural differences across healthcare systems act as both enablers and constraints of digital transformation.

The proposed framework contributes to the literature by providing a structured and integrative perspective on AI adoption in healthcare, with a specific focus on home care services. For practitioners and policymakers, the results underline the need to move beyond technology-centric approaches and to invest in the systematic development of organizational capabilities. Future research should focus on empirically validating the proposed framework through cross-country studies and expert-based approaches, such as Delphi studies, to further refine the understanding of digital readiness in diverse healthcare contexts.

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