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Mustapha Bedjekina
E-mail: ffmostapha@gmail.com
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7731-1462
Faculty of law and political sciences, University of Ghardaia

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Professional identity as a barrier to agile management adoption in algerian public administration: the IBAM model

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine whether professional identity constitutes a direct and indirect barrier to agile management adoption among Algerian civil servants and to develop the Identity Barrier to Agility Model (IBAM) as an empirically grounded explanatory framework. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed. Data were collected from 384 civil servants across five Algerian provinces through a standardized questionnaire using multi-stage stratified random sampling. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with bootstrapped mediation analyses based on 5,000 resamples was applied to test the proposed model, while 24 semi-structured interviews provided qualitative contextualization of the quantitative findings. The results revealed high levels of professional identity and substantial resistance to agile management adoption. Performative compliance emerged as the dominant form of resistance. SEM analysis demonstrated that professional identity exerted a significant direct effect on agility resistance and indirect effects through routine attachment, fear of privilege loss, and agile self-efficacy deficits. The model explained 58.1% of the variance in resistance. Leadership support significantly weakened the relationship between professional identity and resistance, although it did not eliminate it. Senior executives reported the highest levels of performative compliance despite displaying lower overt resistance. The study concludes that professional identity functions as a multidimensional barrier to agile management adoption in Algerian public administration. Resistance is expressed primarily through performative compliance rather than explicit opposition, suggesting that reform evaluations based solely on visible adoption indicators may underestimate underlying resistance dynamics.

Keywords: agile management; professional identity; performative compliance; public sector reform

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La identidad profesional como barrera para la adopción de la gestión ágil en la administración pública argelina: el modelo IBAM

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar si la identidad profesional constituye una barrera directa e indirecta para la adopción de la gestión ágil entre los funcionarios públicos argelinos y desarrollar el Modelo de Barrera Identitaria para la Agilidad (IBAM) como un marco

explicativo sustentado empíricamente. Se empleó un diseño mixto secuencial explicativo. La información fue recopilada mediante un cuestionario estandarizado aplicado a 384 funcionarios públicos de cinco provincias de Argelia, seleccionados a través de un muestreo aleatorio estratificado multietápico. Para contrastar las relaciones propuestas se utilizó modelamiento de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM) con análisis de mediación mediante bootstrap de 5.000 remuestreos, complementado con 24 entrevistas semiestructuradas destinadas a contextualizar los hallazgos cuantitativos. Los resultados evidenciaron niveles elevados de identidad profesional y una resistencia significativa a la adopción de la gestión ágil. El cumplimiento performativo se identificó como la forma predominante de resistencia. Asimismo, el análisis SEM confirmó que la identidad profesional ejerció un efecto directo significativo sobre la resistencia y efectos indirectos a través del apego a las rutinas, el temor a la pérdida de privilegios y los déficits de autoeficacia ágil. El modelo explicó el 58,1 % de la varianza de la resistencia. Además, el apoyo del liderazgo redujo significativamente la intensidad de dicha relación. Se concluye que la identidad profesional constituye una barrera multidimensional para la adopción de la gestión ágil en la administración pública argelina, manifestándose principalmente mediante cumplimiento performativo más que por oposición abierta, lo que puede conducir a interpretaciones erróneas cuando las reformas se evalúan únicamente mediante indicadores visibles de adopción.

Palabras clave: gestión ágil; identidad profesional; cumplimiento performativo; reforma del sector público.

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A identidade profissional como barreira à adoção da gestão ágil na administração pública argelina: o modelo IBAM

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo examinar se a identidade profissional constitui uma barreira direta e indireta à adoção da gestão ágil entre servidores públicos argelinos e desenvolver o Modelo de Barreira Identitária à Agilidade (IBAM) como uma estrutura explicativa fundamentada empiricamente. Foi utilizado um desenho de métodos mistos sequencial explicativo. Os dados foram coletados por meio de um questionário padronizado aplicado a 384 servidores públicos de cinco províncias da Argélia, selecionados mediante amostragem aleatória estratificada em múltiplos estágios. Para testar o modelo proposto, empregou-se modelagem de equações estruturais (SEM) com análises de mediação por bootstrap de 5.000 reamostragens, complementadas por 24 entrevistas semiestruturadas destinadas a contextualizar os resultados quantitativos. Os resultados demonstraram elevados níveis de identidade profissional e resistência significativa à adoção da gestão ágil. A conformidade performativa destacou-se como a principal forma de resistência. Além disso, a análise SEM confirmou que a identidade profissional exerceu efeito direto significativo sobre a resistência e efeitos indiretos mediados pelo apego às rotinas, pelo medo da perda de privilégios e por déficits de autoeficácia ágil. O modelo explicou 58,1% da variância da resistência. O apoio da liderança reduziu significativamente a intensidade dessa relação, embora não a tenha eliminado completamente. Conclui-se que a identidade profissional atua como uma barreira multidimensional à adoção da gestão ágil na administração pública argelina, manifestando-se principalmente por meio da conformidade performativa em vez da oposição explícita, o que pode levar a interpretações equivocadas quando as reformas são avaliadas apenas por indicadores visíveis de adoção.

Palavras-chave: gestão ágil; identidade profissional; conformidade performativa; reforma do setor público.

INTRODUCTION

The Algerian Administrative Context

The Algerian civil service is governed by Ordonnance 06-03 of 2006. It establishes a grade-based hierarchy where promotion is linked primarily to seniority, not performance (Algérie, 2006). Procedural compliance is the main criterion for professional evaluation. The legal tradition draws heavily from French administrative law — droit administratif — which places a premium on formalism and rule-following (Sverdlik & Oreg, 2023).

Administrative reform is not a new idea in Algeria. It has been a declared priority since at least the early 2000s. The most recent wave, driven by digitalisation objectives, references agility and modernisation repeatedly (Ministry of Digitalisation, 2023). The gap between declared intent and observed practice is documented and persistent.

Understanding that gap requires going beyond the usual explanations. Resource constraints and capacity deficits are real, but they do not explain why civil servants who understand the reform rationale still resist it. Identity does (Klotz et al., 2023).

The Algerian civil service also carries historical weight. State employment acquired significant social prestige during the post-independence nation-building period. Being a civil servant is not just a job — it is a social status, with specific role expectations attached. The École Nationale d'Administration (ENA-Algeria) reinforces procedural norms as professional values, not just organisational requirements. This creates conditions in which identity and procedure become inseparable.

The Problem with Current Accounts

Existing literature attributes agility resistance in public administration to three main factors: technical capacity deficits, resource limitations, and structural design failures. Each matters. None explains the specific pattern this study documents.

Ranerup and Henriksen (2024) found that in German and Danish public administrations, agile vocabulary was adopted into reform discourse without corresponding changes in actual practice. Kautz and Wunter (2024) documented a systematic pattern across European contexts: agile terminology assimilated, governance structures unchanged. Baxter et al. (2023) linked this to institutional logic conflicts — agile management's emphasis on self-organisation contradicts the legal accountability requirements within which public servants operate.

These accounts are useful. But they are structural. They describe what happens without explaining the psychological mechanism that sustains it. Why do individual civil servants, who may intellectually accept the logic of reform, continue to behave in ways that reproduce prior arrangements? Professional identity provides part of the answer.

What This Study Adds

This study makes three contributions. First, it measures agility resistance across three dimensions — behavioural, cognitive, and performative compliance — rather than treating it as unidimensional. Performative compliance is the key addition: it captures the gap between how civil servants talk and how they act. Second, it tests a structural model specifying four simultaneous pathways from identity to resistance, using bootstrapped mediation rather than conceptual argument. Third, it grounds the analysis in the specific institutional characteristics of Algerian public administration, rather than importing frameworks from Western European contexts without contextual adjustment.

Theoretical Framework

Professional Identity

Professional identity in public administration refers to how strongly civil servants define their sense of self through their occupational role, procedural responsibilities, and institutional position (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Battiston et al., 2019). In centralised bureaucratic systems, it consolidates around role adherence rather than outcome achievement — because that is what the system rewards.

In the Algerian case, three institutional features reinforce identity strength. The seniority-based promotion structure means that procedural expertise accumulated over time has real economic value. The legal accountability framework means that deviating from established procedures carries career risk. The historical prestige of state employment means that the civil servant role carries social meaning beyond the workplace.

Molines and Perrier (2024) document identity-threat responses in French public servants facing reform. This study extends that work by specifying the Algerian institutional mechanisms through which identity formation occurs, and by testing multiple pathways rather than a single direct effect.

The IBAM Model

The IBAM (Identity Barrier to Agility Model) draws on four theoretical traditions.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains the core mechanism: people resist changes that threaten positively valued group memberships. For civil servants, the bureaucratic professional role is that membership. Agile management threatens it directly — by redistributing authority, dissolving clear role definitions, and replacing procedure-following with adaptive judgment.

Role identity theory (Stryker, 1980) grounds the routine attachment pathway. Procedural routines are not just habits. They are the daily performances through which professional identity is enacted and maintained. Disrupting them is not merely inconvenient — it is identity-threatening.

Oreg's (2003) resistance-to-change framework provides the dimensional structure for resistance measurement. The IBAM extends it by adding performative compliance as a fourth dimension, capturing covert resistance forms that Oreg's original instrument was not designed to measure.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) grounds the self-efficacy deficit pathway. Strong bureaucratic identity generates perceived incompetence for agile role requirements. The resistance is not to agility in principle — it is to the anticipated experience of performing poorly in an unfamiliar role configuration.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Central question: Through what mechanisms does professional identity function as a barrier to agility adoption in Algerian public administration, and under what conditions is this barrier reduced?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the levels and dimensional profiles of professional identity and agility resistance among Algerian civil servants?
2. Does professional identity predict resistance through three simultaneous mediation pathways?
3. Does perceived leadership support moderate the identity–resistance relationship?
4. Does resistance form — particularly the balance between overt and covert resistance — vary by job rank?

Table 1.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	Basis
H1	Professional identity directly predicts agility resistance	Tajfel and Turner (1979); Molines and Perrier (2024)
H2	Fear of privilege loss mediates H1	Molines and Perrier (2024)
H3	Routine attachment mediates H1	Stryker (1980); Mergel (2024)
H4	Agile self-efficacy deficit mediates H1	Bandura (1997); Oreg (2003)
H5	Perceived leadership support moderates H1 negatively	Ranerup and Henriksen (2024)
H6	Performative compliance is higher among senior executives than operational staff	Baxter et al. (2023)

Methodology

Design

Sequential explanatory mixed-methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative phase first — questionnaire, SEM, moderation analysis. Qualitative phase second — interviews to contextualise and extend statistical findings. The design is appropriate because some mechanisms, particularly the distinction between explicit and performative resistance, require qualitative data to interpret fully.

Sampling

Study sites: Five provinces — Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Sétif, Béjaïa. Selected for geographic diversity and variation in institutional type.

Quantitative sample: N=384. Multi-stage stratified random sampling: province (proportional), institutional type, job rank. Minimum sample from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for populations over 10,000: n=370. Target was 384 to allow rank-level subgroup comparisons. 412 questionnaires distributed; 384 valid responses retained (93.2% response rate).

Qualitative sample: 24 civil servants. Maximum variation purposive sampling on identity score quartile, job rank, province, and gender.

Table 2

Sample Distribution (N=384)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	213	55.5
	Female	171	44.5
Age	Under 35	74	19.3
	35–49	196	51.0
	50 and above	114	29.7
Job rank	Senior executives	84	21.9
	Middle managers	168	43.7
	Operational staff	132	34.4

Seniority	Under 5 years	51	13.3
5–15 years	172	44.8	
Over 15 years	161	41.9	
Province	Algiers	112	29.2
Oran	68	17.7	
Constantine	74	19.3	
Sétif	71	18.5	
Béjaïa	59	15.4	

Instruments

All scales used five-point Likert formats. Arabic versions were developed through forward-backward translation, reviewed by two bilingual experts, and piloted with n=35 civil servants from a sixth province excluded from the main sample.

Professional Identity Scale (PIS-PA): Adapted from Battiston et al. (2019) for Algerian public service. 18 items across three dimensions: Professional Identification (6 items), Identity Continuity (6 items), Occupational Distinctiveness (6 items).

Agility Resistance Scale (ARS-PS): Developed for this study. 24 items across three dimensions: Behavioural Resistance (8 items), Cognitive Resistance (8 items), Performative Compliance (8 items). Sample performative compliance item: "I use agile terminology in meetings but continue applying traditional procedures in my actual work."

Fear of Losing Privileges Scale (FLPS): 10 items adapted from Oreg (2003).

Agile Self-Efficacy Deficit Scale (ASEDS): 8 items measuring perceived inability to perform effectively in agile role configurations.

Perceived Leadership Support Scale (PLS): 8 items adapted from Ford et al. (2021).

Validity and Reliability

Table 3

CFA Results

Construct	Items	α	AVE	CR	Discriminant validity
Professional Identification	6	0.871	0.624	0.908	Confirmed
Identity Continuity	6	0.856	0.601	0.893	Confirmed
Occupational Distinctiveness	6	0.843	0.587	0.879	Confirmed
Behavioural Resistance	8	0.889	0.641	0.918	Confirmed
Cognitive Resistance	8	0.877	0.628	0.907	Confirmed
Performative Compliance	8	0.861	0.609	0.891	Confirmed
Fear of Losing Privileges	10	0.892	0.651	0.921	Confirmed
Perceived Leadership Support	8	0.838	0.577	0.872	Confirmed

All AVE values exceeded 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity confirmed using Fornell and Larcker (1981). Measurement model fit: $\chi^2/df=2.14$, CFI=0.957, TLI=0.948, RMSEA=0.049, SRMR=0.054.

Common Method Bias

Harman's single-factor test: first unrotated factor = 23.1% of total variance. Full collinearity VIF range: 1.19–2.94. Both below standard thresholds (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Kline, 2016). Common method bias is not a major concern.

SEM and Moderation

SEM in AMOS 26, maximum likelihood estimation. Direct and indirect paths estimated simultaneously. Indirect effects: bootstrap with 5,000 resamples, 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (Hayes, 2018). Moderation tested through product-indicator approach with mean-centred variables. Simple slopes at ±1 SD of the moderator.

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews conducted in Algerian Darija and French. Average duration: 51 minutes. Audio-recorded with consent. Transcribed verbatim; back-translation checks on 15% of material. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in NVivo 14. Two researchers coded independently. Inter-coder reliability on 20% subsample: $\kappa=0.81$. Member-checking with eight participants on preliminary theme summaries.

Reflexivity: One team member works in Algerian public administration. This provided access but also required deliberate management of insider positionality, documented in a reflexivity journal.

Ethics

Institutional ethics approval obtained prior to data collection. Written informed consent from all participants. Anonymised data throughout. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.

Professional Identity and Resistance Means

Construct	Dimension	M	SD	Level
Professional Identity	Identity Continuity	4.12	0.631	High
Professional Identification	3.94	0.714	High	
Occupational Distinctiveness	3.71	0.782	High	
Overall	3.92	0.709	High	
Agility Resistance	Performative Compliance	4.21	0.587	High
Cognitive Resistance	3.87	0.712	High	
Behavioural Resistance	3.54	0.841	Moderate-High	
Overall	3.87	0.713	High	

Performative compliance scored higher than overt behavioural resistance. Civil servants are not, primarily, openly refusing agile management. They are adopting its language while continuing prior practices. This distinction matters enormously for how reform progress is assessed.

Correlation Matrix

Table 5.

Pearson Correlations (N=384)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Professional Identity	—					
2. Agility Resistance	.547**	—				
3. Performative Compliance	.612**	.784**	—			
4. Routine Attachment	.523**	.498**	.471**	—		
5. Fear of Losing Privileges	.489**	.531**	.487**	.412**	—	
6. Agile Self-Efficacy Deficit	.431**	.476**	.443**	.387**	.398**	—
7. Perceived Leadership Support	.201**	−.387**	−.341**	−.298**	−.273**	−.312**

p<0.01

Identity correlates more strongly with performative compliance (r=.612) than with overall resistance (r=.547). This is the first empirical indication that performative compliance is the identity-relevant form of resistance.

Model Fit

Table 6

IBAM Fit Indices

Index	Value	Threshold	Evaluation
χ^2/df	2.31	<3.0	Acceptable
CFI	0.951	>0.95	Acceptable
TLI	0.943	>0.90	Acceptable
RMSEA	0.054	<0.08	Acceptable
SRMR	0.058	<0.08	Acceptable
R^2	0.581	—	58.1% explained

Structural Paths

Table 7

Path Coefficients

Path	β	SE	t	p	95% BC CI
H1: Identity → Resistance (direct)	0.341	0.047	7.26	<0.001	[0.249, 0.433]
H2a: Identity → Fear of Privileges	0.378	0.051	7.41	<0.001	[0.278, 0.478]
H2b: Fear → Resistance	0.287	0.049	5.86	<0.001	[0.191, 0.383]
H3a: Identity → Routine Attachment	0.412	0.044	9.36	<0.001	[0.326, 0.498]
H3b: Routine → Resistance	0.318	0.046	6.91	<0.001	[0.228, 0.408]
H4a: Identity → Self-Efficacy Deficit	0.294	0.053	5.55	<0.001	[0.190, 0.398]
H4b: Self-Efficacy → Resistance	0.261	0.052	5.02	<0.001	[0.159, 0.363]

H5: Identity × Leadership → Resistance	−0.193	0.061	−3.16	0.002	[−0.313, −0.073]

Table 8

Indirect Effects (Bootstrap, 5,000 resamples)

Pathway	β_indirect	SE	95% BC CI
Identity → Routine → Resistance	0.131	0.023	[0.087, 0.178]
Identity → Fear → Resistance	0.109	0.021	[0.068, 0.154]
Identity → Self-Efficacy → Resistance	0.077	0.019	[0.041, 0.117]

All three indirect effects are significant — confidence intervals exclude zero. The direct effect remains significant, confirming partial rather than full mediation. The routine attachment pathway is largest (0.131), followed by fear of privilege loss (0.109) and self-efficacy deficit (0.077).

Moderation

Table 9.

Simple Slopes: Leadership Support as Moderator

Level	β	SE	t	p
Low (−1 SD)	0.521	0.063	8.27	<0.001
Mean	0.341	0.047	7.26	<0.001
High (+1 SD)	0.164	0.071	2.31	0.021

The path coefficient drops by 68.5% from low to high leadership support. But it remains significant at high support (p=0.021). Leadership support is not a solution on its own. It reduces identity-based resistance substantially but does not eliminate it.

Job Rank Differences

Table 10

Resistance Form by Job Rank

Rank	Identity M (SD)	Overall Resistance M (SD)	Performative Compliance M (SD)	Behavioural Resistance M (SD)
Senior executives	4.24 (0.641)	3.91 (0.698)	4.47 (0.554)	3.21 (0.812)
Middle managers	3.98 (0.714)	3.89 (0.721)	4.18 (0.591)	3.51 (0.834)
Operational staff	3.62 (0.758)	3.83 (0.731)	3.98 (0.614)	3.89 (0.847)
F (df=2,381)	14.83***	0.47	11.23***	9.71***
η^2	0.072	0.002	0.056	0.048

p<0.001. Post-hoc Tukey: senior executives vs. operational staff significant on identity and performative compliance (p<0.001).

Total resistance does not differ by rank (F=0.47, p=0.63). What differs is the form. Senior executives show high performative compliance and low overt resistance. Operational staff show the reverse. This inversion is important. Senior executives — who have the authority to enable or block reform — are the group most likely to perform adoption while resisting it substantively.

Qualitative Findings

Table 11

Themes (N=24 interviews)

Theme	References	% participants	Excerpt	IBAM link
Role incompatibility	94	91.7	"This is not how civil servants work — we have procedures to follow."	Direct effect (H1)
Institutional distinctiveness	71	79.2	"A public institution is not a start-up. We have legal accountability."	Cognitive resistance
Accountability under non-hierarchy	58	70.8	"Without a clear hierarchy, who is responsible when something goes wrong?"	Self-efficacy deficit (H4)
Agile vocabulary as performance	47	62.5	"We say agile in meetings. Then everyone goes back and does things as before."	Performative compliance
Reform fatigue	30	50.0	"They have tried reforms many times. Nothing has fundamentally changed."	Contextual amplifier

The "agile vocabulary as performance" theme is the qualitative confirmation of the highest-scoring quantitative dimension. It was not prompted — participants raised it independently across all five provinces.

"Reform fatigue" was not in the original IBAM specification. It emerged from interviews as a historically grounded amplifier specific to the Algerian context. Repeated reform cycles without sustained implementation have generated institutional scepticism. When a new reform arrives, experienced civil servants wait — rather than invest — because they have learned that investment is unlikely to be rewarded. This is not identity resistance exactly. But it interacts with identity to deepen it.

DISCUSSION

Performative Compliance as a Diagnostic Problem

The highest-scoring dimension (M=4.21) is also the one most invisible to standard reform assessment. Attendance at agile training, use of agile software, participation in sprint meetings — all of these can be high while performative compliance is also high. Standard reform metrics measure adoption signals that performative compliance produces without reflecting genuine behavioural change.

This has immediate practical consequences. Reform managers who rely on these indicators are not measuring what they think they are measuring. The IBAM model, and specifically the ARS-PS scale, provides a different measurement approach that distinguishes visible adoption from substantive change.

Three Pathways, Three Interventions

The relative magnitudes of the three indirect effects suggest intervention priorities. Routine attachment (0.131) is the largest pathway. This implies that disrupting the procedural routines through which identity is daily maintained — through structured role transition processes, incremental practice change, or reframing agile practices as extensions of professional responsibility — may generate the largest reductions in resistance.

Fear of privilege loss (0.109) points to a different intervention: addressing the material and status dimensions of identity threat directly, through explicit career security guarantees and performance criteria adjustment.

Agile self-efficacy deficit (0.077) suggests training interventions focused on confidence-building in agile role requirements — not generic change management, but specific skill development for the tasks civil servants anticipate performing poorly.

Leadership as a Necessary but Insufficient Condition

A 68.5% reduction in the identity–resistance path coefficient is substantial. But the path remains significant at high leadership support. This is the key practical finding from the moderation analysis. Leadership commitment to agile transformation is necessary. It is not sufficient on its own.

The structural conditions that generate identity-based resistance — seniority-based promotion, procedure-centred evaluation, legal accountability frameworks — remain in place regardless of leadership stance. Addressing them requires institutional redesign that goes beyond individual leadership behaviour.

Reform Fatigue as a Contextual Factor

The qualitative emergence of reform fatigue suggests a dynamic not captured by the IBAM's psychological mechanisms. Historical experience of failed reforms generates a rational prior: new reform initiatives are likely to follow the same pattern. This prior reduces investment in adaptation independently of identity strength. Future research should examine reform fatigue as a moderating variable — it may interact with identity to produce resistance more severe than either predicts alone.

Limitations

Cross-sectional data cannot establish causal ordering between identity formation and resistance development. Self-report measurement of performative compliance requires respondents to acknowledge a gap between their public and private behaviour — social desirability bias may lead to underreporting. The five-province sample, while geographically diverse, does not cover southern Algeria or smaller wilayas. The ARS-PS scale was developed for this study; independent replication is needed before broad application. Macro-level variables — trade union activity, ministerial policy variation, administrative legal framework — were not modelled.

CONCLUSION

Professional identity functions as a multi-pathway barrier to agility adoption in Algerian public administration. Total explanatory power of 58.1% (R^2) is substantial. The primary resistance form is not open refusal — it is performative compliance. Senior executives show the highest levels of it, which matters because they are the people with greatest capacity to enable or constrain genuine change.

Leadership support significantly reduces identity-based resistance but does not resolve it. The structural conditions that generate it — including seniority-based promotion, procedure-centred evaluation, and the specific institutional history of the Algerian civil service — require separate intervention.

Three practical recommendations follow from the findings. First, reform assessment should measure performative compliance explicitly, using instruments capable of distinguishing visible adoption from behavioural change. Second, leadership development for agile transitions should focus on practice-based signals of commitment rather than general change management communication. Third, reform programme design should address the routine attachment pathway directly, through gradual role redefinition processes that make agile practices feel professionally compatible rather than professionally threatening.

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