

The Impacts of Digitalisation on Public Service Delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities

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Abstract

Digitisation has emerged as a key strategy for improving efficiency, transparency, and accessibility in public service delivery across the world. In Tanzania, the government has increasingly adopted digital technologies within Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to modernise administrative processes and enhance service provision to citizens. Despite these efforts, the extent to which digitisation has influenced public service delivery at the local government level remains an important area of investigation. This study examines the impacts of digitisation on public service delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities. The study employed a qualitative research approach utilising a systematic literature review and case study design to analyse existing studies, policy reports, and documented experiences related to digital transformation in public administration. The findings indicate that digitisation has significantly improved service delivery by enhancing administrative efficiency, reducing bureaucratic procedures, increasing transparency, and expanding access to government services through digital platforms. Digital systems such as electronic payment mechanisms, online service portals, and integrated information management systems have contributed to faster service provision and improved accountability in public institutions. However, the study also identifies several challenges affecting the effectiveness of digital initiatives, including inadequate digital infrastructure, limited internet connectivity in rural areas, insufficient digital skills among public servants and citizens, and financial constraints within local government institutions. The study concludes that while digitization presents substantial opportunities for improving public service delivery in Tanzania, addressing infrastructural, institutional, and capacity-related challenges is essential for maximizing its benefits. The study recommends increased investment in ICT infrastructure, capacity building for public officials, improved digital literacy among citizens, and stronger policy frameworks to support sustainable digital governance in Local Government Authorities.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed the way governments design and deliver public services across the world. Digitalisation in public administration involves the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into governmental processes to improve efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and responsiveness of services to citizens (Androniceanu & Georgescu, 2023).

Governments increasingly adopt digital platforms to streamline bureaucratic procedures, reduce administrative costs, and enhance citizens' engagement with public institutions. As a result, digital transformation has become

a central strategy for improving governance and promoting socio-economic development in both developed and developing countries (Ariyadi, & Akbar, 2025).

Globally, empirical evidence demonstrates that digitalisation can enhance the quality, accessibility, and reliability of public service delivery. For example, digital government initiatives in several European countries have improved administrative efficiency and citizens' satisfaction with public services through the automation of processes and the introduction of online service platforms (Kniazieva et al., 2023). Similarly, studies conducted in China indicate that digital transformation significantly influences citizens' evaluation of public services by improving transparency and responsiveness in service provision (Ma, & Wang, 2023). Other initiatives, such as the establishment of big data pilot zones and digital village programs, have also demonstrated how digital technologies can improve the delivery of basic public services, particularly in rural areas where traditional service provision mechanisms face significant challenges (Mao et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2024). These experiences highlight the growing importance of digitalisation as a tool for strengthening governance systems and enhancing the effectiveness of public administration.

In developing countries, digitalisation has similarly emerged as a key mechanism for addressing long-standing challenges associated with inefficiency, bureaucratic delays, and limited access to public services. Many governments have implemented e-government systems and digital platforms to enhance administrative coordination and improve service accessibility for citizens (Ofoma, 2021). In Africa, for instance, countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana have introduced digital governance initiatives aimed at improving transparency, efficiency, and citizen participation in public service delivery (Sangwa & Mutabazi, 2025). In Kenya, digitalisation of government processes has contributed to improvements in service provision across several sectors, although challenges related to infrastructure, institutional coordination, and digital skills remain significant (Anguche, Kimani, & Ndururi, 2024). These experiences suggest that while digital transformation holds considerable promise for improving governance, its success largely depends on institutional capacity, technological infrastructure, and policy coordination.

Despite these positive developments, the digitalisation of public services also presents several challenges for governments in developing countries. These include inadequate technological infrastructure, limited digital literacy among citizens and public officials, financial constraints, and resistance to organisational change within public institutions (Omweri, 2024). Furthermore, the uneven distribution of digital resources between urban and rural areas often results in disparities in access to digital services, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities in service delivery (Mburu & Munene, 2024). Consequently, while digital technologies offer opportunities for improving governance and service delivery, their implementation requires careful planning, investment in infrastructure, and institutional reforms to ensure inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

In Tanzania, digitalisation has increasingly become an important component of public sector reform aimed at improving efficiency and accountability in service delivery. The government has introduced various digital platforms and e-government initiatives like e-Ardhi for land services, Integrated Domestic Revenue Administration system (IDRAS) for tax collection, TAMISEMI Mobile app for citizens to stay informed about regional and local governments, e-Mrejesho for citizens to submit complaints and feedback on public services and e-Kijiji for connecting all villages in rural areas purposely to modernize administrative processes and enhance access to public services.

Moreover, recent studies highlight efforts to improve electronic service systems in Tanzanian public institutions to enhance service accessibility and administrative performance (Mwamkinga, & Barongo, 2025). Similarly, the adoption of digital technologies in public administration has been associated with improvements in organisational efficiency and service coordination within government institutions (Mwamkinga & Barongo, 2025). In addition, initiatives such as the digitalisation of government payment systems have contributed to improved transparency and efficiency in public financial management (Mushi, 2024).

Nevertheless, the implementation of digital systems in Tanzania's public sector, particularly within Local Government Authorities (LGAs), continues to face several challenges. These include limited technological infrastructure, insufficient technical capacity among public officials, and inconsistencies in the integration of digital systems across government institutions. Since LGAs are responsible for delivering essential services such as health, education, water supply, and administrative services at the grassroots level, the effectiveness of digitalisation initiatives within these institutions is crucial for improving public service delivery and promoting local development.

Given the growing importance of digital technologies in governance, understanding how digitalisation influences service delivery at the local government level is essential for informing policy and administrative reforms. While several studies have examined digital transformation in public administration globally, limited research has specifically focused on the impacts of digitalisation on service delivery within Tanzania's Local Government Authorities. Therefore, this study examines the impacts of digitalisation on public service delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities, with the aim of assessing how digital initiatives influence efficiency, accessibility, and the overall effectiveness of local government services.

METHODOLOGIES

This study adopted a systematic literature review and case study approach to examine the impacts of digitalisation on public service delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities (LGAs). The combination of these two approaches enabled the study to analyse existing scholarly knowledge on digital transformation in public administration while also examining contextual experiences relevant to Tanzania and comparable developing countries. Using these methods provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital technologies influence governance efficiency, accessibility, and service quality within local government institutions. Studies on public sector digitalisation emphasise the importance of synthesising existing empirical research alongside contextual analysis to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with digital governance reforms (Fischer et al., 2021; Ariyadi, & Akbar, 2025).

Systematic literature review

A systematic literature review was conducted to synthesise existing research on the relationship between digitalisation and public service delivery. The review focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy reports, and conference papers addressing digital governance, e-government systems, and digital transformation in public administration. This approach allowed the study to identify key themes, trends, and research findings concerning the role of digital technologies in improving public service delivery.

The literature search was conducted using major academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. Keywords used during the search included combinations of terms such as "digitalisation,"

“digital governance,” “e-government,” “public service delivery,” “local government,” and “digital transformation in public administration.”

These keywords were selected to ensure the retrieval of relevant studies examining the effects of digital technologies on government service provision. Previous studies indicate that systematic literature reviews provide a structured method for analysing existing knowledge and identifying research gaps within emerging fields such as digital governance (Fischer et al., 2021).

To ensure methodological rigour, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied when selecting literature for review. Included sources had to meet the following criteria:

- i. The study addressed digitalisation or digital transformation in public administration or public service delivery.
- ii. The research contained empirical findings or comprehensive analytical discussions related to governance and service delivery outcomes.
- iii. The publications were written in English and published within the last two decades to capture contemporary developments in digital governance.

Sources that lacked empirical evidence or were not directly related to digitalisation in public administration were excluded. After applying these criteria, a selection of relevant studies was identified and carefully analyzed. The selected literature was reviewed to identify key themes such as improvements in service accessibility, administrative efficiency, transparency, citizen engagement, and the challenges associated with implementing digital systems in public institutions (Abdussamad et al., 2024).

Case study approach

In addition to the systematic literature review, the study employed a case study approach to provide contextual insights into digitalisation initiatives in public service delivery. The case study approach enables in-depth analysis of governance reforms within specific institutional or national contexts and allows researchers to examine practical experiences associated with digital transformation in the public sector.

The primary focus of the case study was Tanzania's Local Government Authorities, which play a central role in delivering essential services such as education, healthcare, water supply, and administrative services to citizens. Local governments represent a critical level of public administration where the effectiveness of digital systems can significantly influence service accessibility and operational efficiency.

To provide broader comparative insights, the case study also drew lessons from selected countries that have implemented digital governance initiatives in public administration. Previous research highlights the experiences of countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana, where digital technologies have been introduced to improve administrative efficiency and enhance citizen access to government services (Sangwa & Mutabazi, 2025). These comparative experiences help contextualise Tanzania's digitalisation efforts and identify common challenges and best practices in implementing digital public service systems.

The case study involved the analysis of government policy documents, institutional reports, and existing empirical studies relating to digital governance initiatives in Tanzania and other developing countries. Particular attention was given to initiatives aimed at improving electronic public services, digital payment systems, and administrative information systems in public institutions. Studies indicate that examining policy

frameworks and institutional practices provides important insights into the factors that influence the success or failure of digital transformation in government institutions (Mwamkinga & Barongo, 2025).

Data analysis

Data obtained from the systematic literature review and case study analysis were subjected to thematic analysis. This process involved reviewing the selected sources to identify recurring themes related to digitalisation and its impact on public service delivery. Key themes included service accessibility, efficiency of administrative processes, transparency, citizen engagement, institutional capacity, and technological infrastructure.

A comparative analysis was also conducted to examine similarities and differences between Tanzania and other countries implementing digital governance initiatives. This comparison helped highlight contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of digitalisation in public administration, including governance capacity, infrastructure availability, and policy coordination mechanisms.

Limitations

Although the methodology adopted in this study provided valuable insights into digitalisation and public service delivery, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on secondary data means that the findings depend on the availability and quality of existing studies and reports. Second, the systematic literature review focused on English-language publications, which may exclude relevant research published in other languages. Nevertheless, the combination of systematic literature review and case study analysis strengthened the reliability of the findings by integrating diverse sources of evidence and providing a comprehensive understanding of digitalisation in public service delivery.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Digitisation in Public Service Delivery

The systematic literature review and case study findings indicate that digitisation has become a central strategy for improving public service delivery across many governments. Digital technologies such as e-government platforms, digital payment systems, and integrated service portals are increasingly used to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and transparency in public administration. Studies show that digital transformation enables governments to streamline administrative procedures, reduce bureaucratic delays, and improve citizen engagement in service delivery processes (Ariyadi, & Akbar, 2025).

Across different countries, digitalisation has contributed to improved service quality and accessibility. For example, research in China demonstrates that digital transformation positively influences citizens' evaluation of government services by increasing transparency and responsiveness (Ma, & Wang, 2023). Similarly, evidence from Ukraine and Estonia shows that digital technologies improve the availability and reliability of public services (Kniazieva et al., 2023). These findings confirm that digital tools can significantly enhance public administration performance when effectively implemented.

In the African context, governments have increasingly adopted e-governance systems to address inefficiencies in traditional public service delivery. Studies from Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana indicate that digitalisation can improve service efficiency, citizen participation, and transparency in governance (Mbae et al., 2025; Anguche et al., 2024). However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, inadequate digital skills, and institutional resistance often hinder the full realisation of these benefits.

Digitisation Initiatives in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities

The case study findings show that Tanzania has made notable progress in adopting digital systems to improve service delivery within Local Government Authorities (LGAs). The government has introduced several digital platforms aimed at improving administrative efficiency and accessibility of public services. These initiatives include electronic payment systems, online service portals, and integrated information management systems across various government departments.

Research on Tanzanian public institutions highlights that the introduction of digital services has improved operational efficiency and reduced administrative bottlenecks. For instance, the digitisation of public service processes has enhanced the speed and accuracy of service provision by reducing manual paperwork and automating administrative procedures (Temba, 2025). Similarly, studies assessing technology adoption in Tanzanian public administration show that digital systems contribute to improved organisational performance and accountability (Mwamkinga & Barongo, 2025).

Digitised government payment systems have also improved financial transparency and reduced corruption risks by limiting direct interactions between service providers and citizens (Mushi, 2024). These developments demonstrate that digitalisation can strengthen governance structures and improve the quality of public service delivery in Tanzania.

Impact of Digitisation on Efficiency and Accessibility of Services

The results further indicate that digitisation significantly improves efficiency in public service delivery. Digital platforms enable faster processing of applications, reduce service delivery time, and enhance coordination among government departments. Evidence from global studies confirms that digital governance systems enhance administrative effectiveness by simplifying service processes and facilitating real-time data management (Krasnykov et al., 2024).

In Tanzania's LGAs, digital technologies have improved access to government services, particularly for citizens who previously faced challenges related to geographic distance or administrative delays. Online service platforms allow citizens to access services remotely, reducing the need for physical visits to government offices. This aligns with global findings that digital service delivery enhances accessibility and inclusiveness in public administration (Kniazieva et al., 2023).

Furthermore, digitisation has improved citizen engagement by enabling governments to communicate more effectively with service users. Digital platforms allow citizens to submit applications, track service requests, and provide feedback, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in governance.

Challenges Affecting Digitisation in Local Government Authorities

Despite the positive impacts, several challenges continue to limit the effectiveness of digitization in Tanzania's LGAs. One major challenge is inadequate digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where internet connectivity and electricity supply remain limited. Similar infrastructure constraints have been reported in other African countries implementing digital government systems (Mohale, 2024).

Another challenge is the limited digital skills among public servants and citizens. Successful implementation of digital systems requires a workforce capable of managing digital platforms and adapting to technological

changes. However, studies indicate that insufficient training and capacity-building programs often hinder the effective use of digital technologies in public institutions (Brunetti et al., 2020).

Institutional resistance to change also poses a barrier to digital transformation. Public sector organizations often operate under established bureaucratic structures that may resist new technological approaches. This resistance can slow the adoption of digital innovations and reduce their potential impact on service delivery.

Additionally, financial constraints may limit the development and maintenance of digital infrastructure within local government institutions. The implementation of digital governance systems requires substantial investment in technology, training, and system maintenance, which may strain limited government budgets.

Implications for Public Service Delivery

The findings suggest that digitisation has considerable potential to transform public service delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities. When effectively implemented, digital technologies can improve service efficiency, accessibility, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. However, achieving these outcomes requires addressing key institutional and infrastructural challenges.

Strengthening digital infrastructure, enhancing digital literacy among public servants, and promoting institutional support for technological innovation are essential for maximising the benefits of digitisation. Moreover, integrating digital platforms across government departments can further enhance coordination and improve the overall effectiveness of public service delivery systems.

Overall, the results demonstrate that digitisation is a critical driver of public sector modernisation and governance improvement in Tanzania. Continued investment in digital governance initiatives will be necessary to ensure that Local Government Authorities can deliver efficient, transparent, and citizen-centred public services.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined the impacts of digitisation on public service delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities (LGAs) using a systematic literature review and case study approach. The findings indicate that digitisation plays an increasingly significant role in transforming the delivery of public services by improving efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and accountability within public administration.

The results show that digital technologies have contributed to streamlining administrative processes, reducing bureaucratic delays, and improving coordination among government institutions. Digital platforms such as electronic payment systems, online service portals, and integrated information management systems have enabled faster processing of public services and enhanced citizens' ability to access government services remotely. These developments demonstrate that digital transformation can significantly improve the performance and responsiveness of public institutions.

Furthermore, digitisation has enhanced transparency and accountability in public service delivery by reducing manual processes and minimising direct interactions that may facilitate corruption. The adoption of digital governance systems has also strengthened data management and monitoring processes within Local Government Authorities, thereby improving decision-making and institutional performance.

However, despite these benefits, several challenges continue to limit the full realisation of digitisation in Tanzania's public sector. These include inadequate digital infrastructure, limited internet connectivity in rural areas, insufficient digital skills among public servants and citizens, and institutional resistance to technological change. Financial constraints and lack of technical capacity also affect the effective implementation and sustainability of digital governance systems within Local Government Authorities.

Overall, the study concludes that digitisation has the potential to significantly enhance public service delivery in Tanzania. Nevertheless, achieving the full benefits of digital transformation requires comprehensive institutional support, improved technological infrastructure, and sustained capacity building within public institutions.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several policy recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation and effectiveness of digitisation in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities.

- i. First, the government should invest in strengthening digital infrastructure across the country, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Reliable internet connectivity, improved ICT infrastructure, and stable electricity supply are essential for supporting the effective operation of digital government platforms.
- ii. Second, there is a need to enhance digital capacity and skills among public servants working in Local Government Authorities. Continuous training programs and capacity-building initiatives should be implemented to ensure that government employees possess the necessary skills to effectively operate digital systems and manage technological innovations.
- iii. Third, the government should promote digital literacy among citizens to ensure that they are able to access and utilise digital public services effectively. Public awareness programs and digital inclusion initiatives can help reduce the digital divide and ensure that all citizens benefit from digital governance systems.
- iv. Fourth, Local Government Authorities should strengthen institutional frameworks and governance structures that support digital transformation. This includes developing clear policies, regulatory frameworks, and implementation strategies that guide the adoption and management of digital technologies in public service delivery.
- v. Fifth, greater integration and interoperability between different government digital systems should be promoted. Coordinated digital platforms across ministries, departments, and local authorities can improve data sharing, reduce duplication of services, and enhance the overall efficiency of public administration.
- vi. Finally, the government should encourage partnerships with the private sector and development partners to support innovation, funding, and technical expertise in digital government initiatives. Collaborative approaches can accelerate the development and sustainability of digital solutions for public service delivery.

In conclusion, digitisation presents a valuable opportunity for improving governance and public service delivery in Tanzania's Local Government Authorities. By addressing the existing challenges and implementing

appropriate policy measures, the government can fully harness the potential of digital technologies to promote efficient, transparent, and citizen-centred public administration.

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