Students' experiences of learning management systems [LMS] navigation and submission challenges in some Tanzanian higher learning institutions

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ABSTRACT

Learning management systems (LMS) are increasingly used in Tanzanian higher learning institutions to support blended and online learning, yet students often encounter practical barriers when navigating course spaces and submitting assessments. This study explored students' experiences of LMS navigation and submission challenges in selected Tanzanian higher learning institutions, guided by the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Specifically, the study aimed to: (1) identify navigation challenges experienced by students when using the LMS; and (2) identify submission challenges faced by students and how they cope with them. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, using semi-structured interviews with 15 students who had used LMS within the previous 6 -12 months. Data was analyzed thematically, using a hybrid approach in which inductive coding captured lived experiences while UTAUT constructs informed interpretation. Findings indicate six recurring challenges, which are access and login friction; inconsistent course organization and unclear labels; system performance constraints; submission failures and uncertainty; significant cost and time burdens linked to data bundles and travel for connectivity; and reliance on informal coping strategies such as WhatsApp peer support and screenshot evidence. These barriers reduce students' confidence in the LMS as a reliable channel for learning and assessment, encouraging parallel communication and alternative submission routes. The study recommends a minimum set of institutional interventions like standardized mobile-first course templates, low bandwidth design choices, strengthened ICT helpdesk responsiveness, student onboarding micro-training, and a clear submission confirmation policy with visible "final submission" status and downloadable receipts. Improving these minimum conditions can enhance equity, reduce avoidable penalties, and strengthen learning continuity in resource-constrained higher education settings.

Keywords: Assignment Submission, Elearning Usability, Learning Management System (LMS), Tanzanian Higher Learning Institutions, UTAUT

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are now part of everyday teaching and learning in many universities. In Tanzania, universities and colleges have adopted LMS platforms to share notes, post announcements, manage assignments, and run assessments. In Tanzania, universities and colleges have implemented LMS platforms to support teaching and learning, yet the broader eLearning landscape continues to be shaped by infrastructural and organizational constraints. Prior research on eLearning in Tanzania has repeatedly highlighted challenges such as limited connectivity, high costs and uneven institutional capacity (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018; Mwandosya, 2023). Another, recent work in Tanzanian higher learning institutions also emphasizes that adoption and use of eLearning are influenced by multi-dimensional factors that include the availability of resources and supportive institutional conditions (Kisanjara, 2023), while usability-focused studies point to user experience issues that can undermine effective interaction with LMS environments (Mwengwa, 2022). However, these studies rarely focus on the everyday, micro tasks through which students actually succeed or fail in eLearning, especially LMS navigation and assignment submission. This study extends prior work by focusing on navigation and submission as daily tasks and interpreting them through UTAUT constructs to clarify how effort, expected performance benefits, social influence and facilitating conditions shape students' lived experiences.

Within day to day student learning, two tasks are particularly consequential which are navigating the LMS to locate the right course space, materials, announcements and assessment instructions; and successfully submitting required coursework through LMS. When navigation is confusing, students may fail to access learning resources in time and this can lead to reduced participation and poorer learning outcomes (Zanjani, 2017). Similarly, submission challenges such as upload failures and timeouts problems that Gregory and Morón-García (2009) observed can disrupt electronic assignment submission along with unclear confirmation of submission, can cause late or missing submissions even when students have done and completed the work. Moreover, Kokoç et al. (2021) indicated that such online submission difficulties contribute to student stress and perceptions of unfairness in assessment.

Additionally, evidence from Tanzania suggests that LMS use is often constrained not only by infrastructure and cost but also by practical usability and user experience barriers that affect how users interact with the platform (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018; Mwengwa, 2022). Over time, these frictions can weaken students' engagement with the LMS and reinforce reliance on informal alternatives like peer-to-peer sharing, which may further affect learning communication (Mwandosya, 2023).

To frame these navigation and submission challenges, the study draws on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which explains technology use through performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In an LMS context, performance expectancy relates to whether students believe the LMS can help them to learn effectively and complete their coursework on time. Moreover, effort expectancy aligns closely with how easy it is to navigate menus, locate resources and complete submissions effectively and smoothly. Additionally, social influence reflects the role of peers and lecturers in encouraging or discouraging LMS use and facilitating conditions relates with the availability of reliable internet, institutional support and clear guidance. Because LMS navigation and submission are effort and support intensive tasks, UTAUT is useful as a sensitizing lens for interpreting how usability frictions and constraints in facilitating conditions can shape students' experiences and actual usage behavior (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

This study documents concrete challenges students encounter in navigation and submission processes when the LMS does not work as expected. This study is significant for several stakeholder groups including policy and institutional leadership where findings can inform practical decisions about minimum usability standards, LMS capacity planning, student onboarding and the resourcing of ICT support services to reduce avoidable learning disruption. As for teaching practice, the results can guide lecturers and instructional designers toward more consistent course organization, clearer assessment instructions and submission workflows that reduce ambiguity and error. For ICT support teams, student reported pain points can help prioritize technical fixes like mobile responsiveness, file handling constraints, etc and improve helpdesk responsiveness and guidance materials. For platform design and implementation, the results can support user centered enhancements and lightweight interventions like consistent course templates, clearer submission confirmations and low-bandwidth design choices that fits best the resource-constrained settings highlighted in Tanzanian eLearning research (Kisanjara, 2023; Mtebe & Raphael, 2018).

In this paper, an LMS refers to an institutional digital platform used to manage and deliver learning activities, including access to course materials, announcements, communication tools, quizzes and assignment submission features. "Navigation challenges" refer to difficulties students face when moving through the LMS interface to find content, locate course pages, interpret menus or understand course structure. "Submission challenges" refer to difficulties in uploading or submitting coursework and assessments, including technical failures, unclear instructions, file-format barriers, system timeouts and uncertainty about whether submission was successfully recorded. The scope of the study is limited to students' experiences (not lecturers' or ICT administrators' perspectives) and concentrates on the practical realities of navigating and submitting work through the LMS. Moreover, this study extends prior work by focusing on navigation and submission as daily make or break tasks and interpreting them through UTAUT constructs to clarify how effort, expected performance benefits, social influence and facilitating conditions shape students' lived experiences (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

1.1 Research Objectives

i. To identify navigation challenges experienced by students when using the LMS.
ii. To identify submission challenges faced by students face and how they cope with them.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical review

Research on eLearning systems commonly treats LMS as both a technology artifact and a learning environment, meaning that students' experiences depend on interface usability, perceived learning value and the support conditions around the platform. Classic adoption models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explain technology use mainly through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which makes TAM valuable for capturing whether users see an LMS as beneficial and easy to operate (Davis, 1989). However, because TAM focuses primarily on individual perceptions, it can be less explicit about how social and institutional environments like lecturer expectations, ICT support, connectivity and device access condition actual use factors that are particularly decisive in resource-constrained higher education settings. Hence, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) is suitable for explaining student interaction with LMS features as Venkatesh et al. (2003) argue that, use of behavior is shaped by performance expectancy (learning or task value), effort expectancy (ease of navigating and submitting), social influence (lecturer expectations) and facilitating conditions (devices, connectivity, guidance and support). In this lens, confusing navigation and submission errors increase effort expectancy costs, while

unstable connectivity and weak ICT support undermine facilitating conditions and together encouraging avoidance, workarounds and reduced engagement.

UTAUT's strengths include its integrative nature and strong explanatory performance across adoption studies; for example, Williams et al. (2015) show that UTAUT has been widely validated and often explains substantial variance in technology use intentions and behavior. However, UTAUT also has weaknesses where we find that it was originally developed in organizational settings (Venkatesh et al., 2003), and it can under emphasize deeper socio-technical constraints if treated as an attitude only model and its relationships may vary across contexts and technologies (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Despite these limitations, UTAUT is used here because its constructs provide a clear, theory-grounded bridge between students' lived LMS experiences and sustained use, while still accommodating usability and infrastructure barriers as facilitating conditions which is an important fit for Tanzanian higher education where implementation constraints remain salient (Mtebe & Raphael, 2013). Despite these limitations, UTAUT is used here because it provides a stronger justification than TAM for linking students' lived LMS experiences especially navigation and submission to both perceived task value and the enabling environment, which is a critical fit for Tanzanian higher education where implementation constraints remain salient (Mtebe & Raphael, 2013).

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies in higher education consistently report that LMS usability issues such as inconsistent course structures, unclear labels, broken links and slow loading; reduce students' ability to find materials and follow course requirements, particularly when learners rely on mobile devices and limited bandwidth (Kaburuan et al., 2020). Tanzania focused evidence similarly points to usability and user experience concerns around Moodle based LMS deployments, including barriers that affect student interaction and effective use (Mwengwa, 2022). However, a critical distinction is that many global usability discussions implicitly assume relatively stable access conditions, whereas Tanzanian accounts more frequently show how usability barriers interact with connectivity and device constraints to make even simple tasks like finding a file, opening a page and uploading an assignment; fragile and interruption prone (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018). This suggests that what appears as a design problem in well-resourced settings can become a compounded breakdown in low-resource environments where students cannot easily try again without costs of data bundles, time or access to devices.

Digital divide factors remain a major determinant of eLearning participation across Africa and within countries, with disparities in access to electricity, smartphones, computers and the internet shaping who can engage consistently with online learning systems (Krönke, 2020). In Tanzania, studies of eLearning adoption and application in higher learning institutions highlight infrastructure and resource constraints, while national and regional evidence on affordability and digital access underscores how connectivity conditions can enable or restrict students' ability to use LMS platforms reliably (Kisanjara, 2023). Tanzania mirrors this wider African pattern, but local studies often emphasize affordability and institutional capacity constraints as persistent conditions rather than temporary adoption hurdles, meaning that access limitations are not only barriers to initial uptake but also to reliable day-to-day participation (Kisanjara, 2023). In this sense, the literature from Tanzania align with broader African evidence on structural inequality in digital access, but they also underscore a particularly strong dependence on institutional facilitating conditions like helpdesk availability, orientation support, lab access and clear guidance to bridge gaps for students who do not have stable personal connectivity (Raphael, 2016).

Online assessment and assignment submission also introduce practical and psychological burdens. Research on online assessment shows that technical difficulties, uncertainty about whether submissions were received and time pressure can heighten student anxiety and perceptions of unfairness (Tahir, 2023), while broader studies of online exams or assessment note that system experience and acceptance shape satisfaction and outcomes (Aristeidou et al., 2024). Student support models like ICT helpdesks, orientation, training and peer support; are widely recommended for improving online learning persistence and task completion (Britto & Rush, 2013). Tanzania specific work on blended learning further reports institutional challenges in providing effective student support services, suggesting that gaps in support structures can compound LMS usability and access problems (Raphael, 2016). Critically, Tanzanian literature resonates with these global concerns, yet it also points to a sharper risk profile where connectivity is unstable and support services are constrained and submission becomes a high-stakes single point of failure, with limited opportunities to recover from timeouts, file incompatibilities or platform errors before deadlines (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018). This implies that submission problems should not be treated only as technical glitches but as threats to assessment credibility and student trust when they are frequent and weakly mitigated by institutional support.

Although the literature shows LMS usability concerns, digital divide constraints, online assessment stress and the value of student support, there remains limited Tanzania focused evidence that zooms in specifically on students' lived experiences of LMS navigation and submission workflows as every day, high-stakes tasks are interpreted through a clear adoption lens such as UTAUT. Much prior work emphasizes adoption factors broadly such as infrastructure, attitudes and institutional readiness (Kisanjara, 2023; Mtebe & Raphael, 2018) rather than detailing the practical micro breakdowns that lead to missed content, failed uploads and coping strategies. This study addresses the

outlined gap by using student only interviews and thematic analysis to explain how navigation and submission challenges interact with UTAUT constructs in effort expectancy and facilitating conditions in order to shape engagement and learning continuity in Tanzanian higher learning institutions.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative design to produce a straightforward account of students' experiences with LMS navigation and submission, staying close to participants' everyday language and meanings (Sandelowski, 2000). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview framework that allowed consistent coverage of key topics while remaining flexible to participants' examples and context (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview guide was informed by UTAUT constructs, particularly effort expectancy (ease of navigating the LMS and completing submissions) and facilitating conditions (devices, connectivity and institutional support) to ensure that the questions captured both usability frictions and enabling constraints that shape use behavior (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in selected Tanzanian higher learning institutions where LMS use is part of routine teaching and assessment. Institutions were approached to reflect variation in student learning environments and LMS use contexts while maintaining institutional anonymity, since the paper focuses on student experiences rather than institutional performance. Initial access was obtained by formally approaching institutional faculty heads, department heads, eLearning units and ICT units through an enquiry by describing the study purpose, inclusion criteria and confidentiality procedures. After permission was granted, interested students were contacted by the researcher directly and eligibility was confirmed based on recent LMS use which was within the past 6-12 months for accessing materials, receiving announcements or submitting coursework.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

In this study, a purposive sampling technique was used to capture diverse experiences like year of study, program, smartphone only vs. laptop users, on campus vs. off campus access (Patton, 2015). Fifteen (15) students were interviewed, with recruitment guided by meaning saturation that is when additional interviews no longer add substantially new insights (Guest et al., 2006). No monetary incentives were offered; participation was voluntary and students were informed that their decision to participate or not to participate would not affect their grades, services or relationship with the institution.

3.4 Data Collection

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide developed through a two stage process. First, the researcher identified core domains based on the study focus of navigation and submission and mapped each domain to UTAUT constructs to ensure theoretical coverage (Venkatesh et al., 2003). For example, questions on finding course materials and understanding menus aligned with effort expectancy, while questions on device availability, internet stability, training and helpdesk access aligned with facilitating conditions; prompts about lecturer expectations and peer guidance aligned with social influence and prompts about perceived value of the LMS for learning and assessment aligned with performance expectancy. Second, the guide was refined for clarity and local relevance through expert review and was piloted with 4 students who met the inclusion criteria. Pilot feedback was used to improve wording, sequencing and probing prompts and the pilot interviews were not included in the final analysis.

The actual interviews were conducted in person or online depending on participant availability and lasted about 25-35 minutes. With consent, interviews were audio recorded, complemented by brief field notes. Interviews were conducted in both English and Kiswahili depending on participant preference and probes were used to elicit concrete examples of what happened during navigation or submission attempts, including coping strategies.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with steps of familiarization, initial coding, theme development, review, refinement, and naming (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding followed a hybrid approach that is inductive coding captured emergent student experiences while UTAUT constructs were used as a sensitizing framework during theme refinement and interpretation (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

3.6 Ethics and Trustworthiness

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics review process prior to data collection. Participants received an information sheet explaining the study purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality and the right to withdraw. Written or recorded verbal informed consent was obtained before interviews. Trustworthiness

was supported through member checking which included sharing brief interpretive summaries with a subset of participants for confirmation and maintaining an audit trail of coding and analytic decisions (Birt et al., 2016). Participation was voluntary, confidentiality and secure data storage procedures were maintained throughout.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The findings from this study, span across various challenges including access and login, navigation and course organization, system performance and mobile usability, submission failures and uncertainty, cost and time burden. Below is a summary table (table 1) and further discussions are articulated thereafter.

Table 1

Challenges, UTAUT Mapping and Coping Strategies

Challenge area	Student-described problem	Primary UTAUT construct(s) affected	Typical coping strategies	Likely consequence on learning
Access and login	OTP delays Password resets Frequent logouts	Effort expectancy (hard to use) Facilitating conditions (account systems network reliability)	Retrying multiple times Using different times of day Borrowing devices or data	Delayed access Missed quizzes or announcements Reduced routine use
Navigation and course organization	Inconsistent layouts across modules Broken links PDF errors	Effort expectancy (more searching), Performance expectancy (LMS seen as unreliable for finding requirements)	Asking peers for screenshots Saving files offline when possible	Reduced participation Missed instructions
System performance and mobile usability	Slow loading near deadlines; Downtime; Buttons hidden on phones	Facilitating conditions (infrastructure or platform) and Effort expectancy (extra steps)	Moving to network spots	Time and cost burden Stress Drop off from LMS reliance
Submission failures and uncertainty	Upload errors and timeouts Unclear final submission	Performance expectancy (can't trust LMS to complete assessment) Effort expectancy (re-uploads) Facilitating conditions	Submitting early Screenshots as evidence Use email or WhatsApp fallback	Anxiety, Perceived unfairness Fragmented assessment traceability
Cost and time burden	Bundles consumed by retries Scanning costs Travel for connectivity	Facilitating conditions (affordability or access)	Budget trade-offs Borrowing hotspots	Inequitable participation Disengagement for low-resource students
Informal workarounds	Reliance on WhatsApp peers	Social influence (peer norms)	Peer mentoring Shared instructions Alternative submissions	Short term risk reduction Inconsistent standards

4.2 Navigation Challenges Experienced by Students when Using the LMS

4.2.1 Access and login friction

Students repeatedly described login as the first barrier gate to learning, where password resets and OTP delays made routine entry into the LMS unreliable. These experiences map directly to UTAUT construct including effort expectancy because repeated login failures increase perceived difficulty and time cost, and to facilitating conditions because they reflect weak account support and unstable connectivity conditions that hinder access even when motivation exists (Venkatesh et al., 2003). A student noted, *"When the network drops, it logs me out. Then I start again, and the quiz time is already running"* (S11, 13th August 2025). This pattern also indicates a downstream effect on performance expectancy, if access cannot be trusted, the LMS is less likely to be perceived as a dependable tool for completing time sensitive learning tasks. In relation to prior Tanzanian evidence, Mtebe and Raphael (2018) document infrastructural and institutional constraints as broad inhibitors of eLearning uptake and sustained use; the present findings extend this by showing how those constraints materialize as repeated micro failures at the very first step of daily LMS use (login). In other words, what earlier work frames as access constraints becomes, in students' lived experience, a recurring effort cost that accumulates across the semester and undermines routine engagement even when perceived value remains high (Abbad, 2021).

4.2.2 Navigation and Course Organization Problems

Students reported that course pages were structured differently across modules and lecturers, causing confusion about where to find notes, announcements or assessment instructions. In UTAUT terms, inconsistent structures raise effort expectancy costs because students must relearn navigation patterns for each course, and they can reduce performance expectancy when students conclude that the LMS is unreliable for completing core academic tasks (Mahande et al., 2019). One participant explained,

> *"In one course everything is in 'Weeks', another has 'Topics', another has random files. You spend time just searching"* (S06 on 8th August, 2025).

Broken links further intensified these perceptions which were said another participant,

> *"Sometimes the link is there but it doesn't open, especially PDFs. You just see 'error' or blank page"* (S14, 18th August, 2025).

Tanzanian usability studies like Mwengwa (2022) report User Experience (UX) related difficulties. This study extends the evidence by showing that inconsistencies are not just usability problems, but repeated expectancy failures that undermine trust in the LMS as a dependable academic environment, especially when deadlines and assessment instructions depend on correct navigation.

4.1.3 System Performance Constraints

Students described slow pages, downtime near deadlines and mobile display problems, especially when many users were online at the same time. These constraints strongly reflect facilitating conditions in UTAUT; even motivated students struggle if bandwidth, servers and mobile usability do not support key tasks (Venkatesh et al., 2003). They also increase effort expectancy costs because students must zoom, retry, and invest more time and data bundles to complete basic actions A student shared,

> *"Around evening when everyone is submitting, it becomes very slow; you click and it keeps loading until your bundle finishes"* (S01, 4th August, 2025).

Another said,

> *"On my phone the submit button is hidden; you zoom and it jumps. You are scared to press wrong thing"* (S09, on 12th August, 2025).

Similar usability challenges in low-resource conditions are widely observed in literatures from African eLearning contexts (Unwin et al., 2010) and in Tanzania specific usability work, including mobile based LMS usability testing and Moodle UX studies (Kondoro et al., 2023). These frictions matter because navigation delays cascade into missed announcements, late starts and lower engagement which leads to reduction of learning effectiveness that LMS adoption is meant to improve (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018; Mtakyawa & Banele, 2024). This study contributes by connecting these infrastructure issues explicitly to UTAUT and weakening facilitating conditions and increasing effort expectancy together erode sustained use.

4.3 Submission Challenges faced by Students

4.3.1 Submission failures and uncertainty

Students consistently described submission as the highest-stakes LMS interaction. Upload errors, timeouts, file format restrictions and unclear submitted status created fear of penalties and disputes. These experiences primarily undermine performance expectancy because the LMS is perceived as unable to reliably deliver the intended outcome (successful submission and recorded proof), while repeated failures raise effort expectancy costs through re-uploads and troubleshooting. Where instability is network related or platform related, facilitating conditions are also implicated (Venkatesh et al., 2003). One student said,

> *"It reaches 100% then says 'failed'. You try again but the deadline is near and this makes your heart beats faster"* (S07 on 9th August, 2025).

Another explained,

> *"Sometimes it shows 'draft saved' not 'final'. Later the lecturer says you didn't submit. Without proof you suffer"* (S12, 14th August, 2025).

As Gregory and Morón-García (2009) argue, confirmation mechanisms and clear submission states are essential for user trust. Moreover, the anxiety dimension also aligns with studies showing online learning and assessment can trigger stress when systems feel uncertain or punitive (Phanphech et al., 2022; Maslov et al., 2021). Although, Mtebe and Raisamo, (2014) document constraints broadly, this study's findings sharpen the argument by identifying submission as a single point of failure that concentrates multiple UTAUT risks including effort, enabling conditions and perceived performance outcome into one high-stakes moment.

4.3.2 Cost and Time Burdens

Students framed LMS participation as a financial and time burden by expressing that repeated logins, slow loading and re-uploads consume data bundles; some travel to network spots or pay cybercafés to scan or convert documents and upload reliably. This resonates with digital divide evidence showing that affordability, device access and connectivity strongly shape digital learning participation in Africa (Krönke, 2020). One participant noted,

> *"To submit I go near town where the network is strong, or to a café. I pay for scanning and internet; it becomes expensive"* (S10, 13th August, 2025).

Another said,

> *"Sometimes you choose bundles or food. If you fail twice, you buy again"* (S04). A third student added, *"When deadlines come, you see students walking to places with strong network near the main road or specific spots just to submit they assignments"* (S03, 6th August, 2025).

Tanzania focused eLearning work has long reported that infrastructure and resource constraints remain core barriers to consistent eLearning use (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018) and recent Tanzanian studies on usability and affordability continue to show cost and access as practical determinants of participation (Ikuja et al., 2025).

4.3.3 Informal Workarounds

Students relied heavily on peers and informal channels to reduce risk, demonstrating the importance of social influence and private facilitating conditions that reflect UTAUT and emerge when formal systems are fragile (Venkatesh et al., 2003). WhatsApp groups were used to share announcements, locate hidden content and interpret instructions. One student said,

> *"If you don't find the link, you ask in WhatsApp and someone sends screenshot of the steps"* (S02, 5th August, 2025).

Another explained,

> *"We submit early and take screenshots as evidence. If it fails, we email with the screenshot"* (S05, 7th August, 2025).

Some described parallel submission routes:

> *"When LMS is down, we beg the lecturer to accept email or WhatsApp, but it depends on the lecturer"* (S13, 17th August, 2025).

These strategies reduce immediate risk but can fragment communication and weaken assessment traceability, echoing concerns in African LMS literature where informal channels substitute for institutional platforms under constraints conditions (Unwin et al., 2010). Linking back to Tanzanian studies, Mtebe and Raphael (2013) highlight the importance of support systems, hence this study adds a specific touch where peer support and informal channels are seen not only supportive, but function as a compensatory infrastructure that students build to maintain continuity when institutional facilitating conditions are insufficient. Moreover, this extends prior Tanzanian work by showing how social influence operates as a survival mechanism that enables continuation, while simultaneously creating governance risks like inconsistent submission rules and fragmented records.

4.4 Implications for Elearning Effectiveness and Institutional Action

The findings suggest LMS navigation and submission barriers create friction points that weaken participation, timely access to learning materials and assessment fairness. In UTAUT terms, improving eLearning effectiveness requires raising effort expectancy like making core tasks simpler and more predictable; and strengthening facilitating conditions including reliable access, mobile usability and responsive support; while leveraging social influence in structured ways (Abbad, 2021). Practically, institutions can: (1) standardize course layout with a consistent template; (2) ensure mobile first, low data design and schedule aware capacity planning; (3) implement a clear submission workflow with visible "final submission" status plus downloadable receipts; (4) provide micro training and self-help guides; and (5) strengthen helpdesk response time and incident communication.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study showed that students' engagement with LMS learning in Tanzanian higher learning institutions is constrained by a chain of practical barriers including recurrent access and login friction like password resets, OTP bottleneck and frequent logouts; inconsistent course organization that makes navigation unpredictable; system performance limitations like slow loading, downtime and mobile incompatibility; and high-stakes submission failures marked by upload errors and unclear confirmation of successful submission, all compounded by data costs and time burdens that push students toward informal workarounds such as WhatsApp and screenshot to use as evidence. These barriers directly undermine UTAUT's effort expectancy and facilitating conditions and lead to weakening sustained LMS use even when learners see value in eLearning and echoing broader evidence on Tanzanian eLearning constraints and Africa's digital divide. Moreover, the findings suggest that the future of eLearning in Tanzania will

depend less on just having LMS alone and more on whether higher learning institutions can make efforts on routine LMS tasks reliably achievable for students using mobile devices and low cost connectivity. Furthermore, targeted improvements to navigation and submission reliability can gradually accelerate the normalization of blended learning, strengthen confidence in online assessment and support more convenient learning continuity across diverse student access conditions.

5.2 Recommendations

The most actionable recommendation is to implement a standardized, low-bandwidth, mobile first course template across modules, paired with a clear submission confirmation policy (visible "final submission" status and a downloadable receipt). Together, these measures reduce usability friction and submission uncertainty at the most critical points of student participation, improving equity, lowering avoidable penalties and supporting learning continuity under constrained connectivity and affordability conditions.

A phased implementation roadmap is recommended whereas Phase 1 (0-6 weeks) may include adoption of minimum template standards like common labels, topic structure, consistent placement of announcements, instructions and resources; publish submission rules like what counts as "final," acceptable evidence and dispute handling expectations; and produce short micro guides through PDF and brief video covering login recovery, navigation and submit plus verify. Phase 2 (6-12 weeks) may include strengthening submission receipts like having timestamp, file name, course; conduct low-bandwidth checks like lightweight pages, reduced heavy formats; and introduce a helpdesk escalation protocol for deadline periods with clear incident communication. Phase 3 (3-6 months) may include institutionalized practices through staff onboarding on template use and assessment workflows, peak period capacity planning (monitoring and performance tuning near deadlines) and defined KPIs (e.g., fewer failed uploads, fewer disputes, faster task completion). Before full rollout, institutions should run a one semester pilot in 6-10 courses across two departments and evaluate using student surveys and interviews plus LMS logs like failed uploads, submission completion times, helpdesk tickets and deadline related late submissions.

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