

Public websites' contents and their implications in mandated functions: A case of Tanzania local government authorities

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ABSTRACT

To share information and offer services as well as enhance administrative transparency, the local government authorities (LGAs) are increasingly relying on public websites. Nonetheless, the extent to which the content of websites makes the smooth execution of legally mandated local government operations possible, particularly in developing countries, is still unknown. This paper examines the performance of the LGAs in Tanzania based on the accessibility, relevance of functionality, and scope of the content on the government websites, and it was guided by public value theory and the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework. The study employs a quantitative explanatory method using stratified and purposive sampling techniques to select respondents and get an overall sample of 312 respondents. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through survey data among LGA officials responsible for information management, planning, administrative coordination, and other stakeholders. The data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to test mediating, moderating, and direct relationships among the constructs. The findings indicate that comprehensive and beneficial web content is very helpful in enhancing citizen engagement, accountability, transparency, and service delivery. The correlation between the scope of content and the necessary level of functional performance of the websites is moderated to some degree by the functional relevance, but the influence of the functional relevance on the outcomes of the performance is moderated positively by the institutional capacity. The study comes to the conclusion that government websites must be accessible, relevant, and of high quality in order for digital governance to be effective. To increase transparency and citizen involvement, the report advises LGAs to invest in institutional and technological capabilities, improve website content management, and create explicit standards for online information sharing. The study provides empirical evidence in the field of e-government research, besides providing policy-relevant insights to enhance the local government's digital communication strategies in resource-constrained settings. A number of useful recommendations can be made based on the outcomes. LGAs need to change the focus on their websites to lessen their emphasis on announcements and PR and focus more on mandate-led content, focusing on service standards, budgets, procurement notices, performance reports, and citizen participation mechanisms. Standardised content guidelines to be followed by all LGA websites need to be developed by national bodies like PO-RALG and the e-Government Authority in order to maintain minimum standards of disclosure and quality. The usability and accessibility based on the user-centred design, frequent content updates, mobile-based interfaces, and bilingualism (Kiswahili/English) should be paid specific attention to close the digital gaps and positively influence the stakeholders.

Keywords: Digital Governance, LGAs, Mandated Functions, Public Websites' Contents, Tanzania

I. INTRODUCTION

The manner in which governments engage with the masses has also evolved due to the presence of digital technologies. They establish new channels of information sharing, public involvement, and better deliveries of services. Government websites have become important assets in the administration of people. They promote accountability, enhance the access to information, and promote transparency among citizens (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Such sites are particularly more crucial in the poor countries such as Tanzania where such resources are often scarce, and the government offices may be hard to access. They are the key intermediaries between people and key processes such as budgeting, planning, delivery of service, and enforcement of the law. Nevertheless, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, we are yet to know enough about how local government bodies (LGAs) actually manage the contents on their websites and what this entails towards the actual execution of their core responsibilities.

The Constitution and laws of Tanzania require that local governments support the local economic growth, offer the necessary public services, and involve citizens in decision making. LGAs are the order of the day in government. To establish a sense of trust and stay democratic, it is essential to keep regular communication on a timely basis about policies, services, performance, and regulations. The websites have the potential to become powerful hubs that integrate services and promote transparency, as well as delivering true value to the common people. They are not mere Internet bulletin boards. Unluckily, previous research reveals that many Tanzanian local government websites are poor. They

often include little information, are not easy to use, and focus more on the fixed news updates rather than useful information that citizens really need (Mtega, 2019). This divide may make people more unable to engage in local issues, hold leaders accountable, or stay informed.

Research related to e-government in various regions of the world has led to the conclusion that digital tools may have major benefits to the population, such as improved services, more efficient operations, greater transparency, greater institutional trust, and a better quality of life in general (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). It is the content of a web site which is of more significance in terms of quality, relevancy, usability and transparency rather than merely having one. Specifically, efficient web content may help local governments in fulfilling their official duties, encourage engagement, and demonstrate the expenditures (such as in budgets and procurement). Other African situations have similar inclinations. Even though the results are inconsistent across areas, some recent studies by the Tanzanian municipal councils have shown that application of ICT tools such as websites and email can enhance good governance principles such as accountability and transparency (Peter & Nnunduma, 2024a). Efficiency and service delivery have also been enhanced even during efforts to adopt e-governance despite the existing challenges that include lack of technical knowledge and finances (Peter & Nnunduma, 2024b).

Nevertheless, most studies concentrate on how much it has been adopted or on the technical issues (security, usability, etc.) instead of analyzing the contents of such websites and its direct links to real governance performance like the delivery of services, transparency in spending money, or communication with inhabitants. As Mtega (2019) argues, a review of Tanzanian LGA websites showed that most of them only address a small scope of topics and are more inclined to report news than provide deeper insights that may allow people to understand issues or collaborate with authorities. The question can be put whether they are truly being the reliable one-stop-information-shops that people can use to become empowered and help accomplish the responsibilities that the local governments have to play as stipulated in the law.

That is the primary question that this paper is trying to answer: To what degree do the contents of Tanzanian local government websites reflect and actually contribute to the fulfilment of its mandate? As of now there is no definitive evidence on the completeness, relevance, and use of the information, as well as the effects it has on such critical outcomes as accountability, transparency, quality of services and community engagement. Without such knowledge, it becomes hard to make prudent changes to their internet presence by policymakers and municipal leaders. This article conceptually develops e-government models and the public value theory. These theories imply that the digital platforms are expected to lead to the tangible and measurable benefits, including easier access to the services, greater transparency, increased trust, and increased openness (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). They are also used to remind one to consider the local context, including institutional capacity, cultural factors, and constraints in digital access that affect the way people use and benefit these tools. The relationship between the governance theory and the deep content analysis of the study assists in clarifying the differences in the consequences of the content on the websites as influencing the performance of Tanzanian LGAs.

1.1 Research Objectives

- i. To map the available information on the websites of Tanzanian LGA and the manner in which it is organized, such as budgets, performance updates, service information, legal duties, and possibilities to participate in the work of the Government.
- ii. To establish the effectiveness of such content in supporting the core governance roles that LGAs are required to undertake (in facilitating access to services, providing information on regulation, or having clear procurement).
- iii. To have direct responses of people and government officials about the usefulness of the site and its accessibility-to bring some real people and experiences to the table.
- iv. To determine the main challenges and opportunities of improving these websites as a means of improving the local governance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The literature study includes theories and in-depth information about the web sites of local governments that operate in public and their relevance and connection to the work that local authorities are supposed to do, especially in such a country as Tanzania.

2.1.1 Public View Theory

The theory that underlines the present study is the public value theory, which was first formulated by Mark H. Moore in the year 1995. According to Moore (1995), the development of the public value by the organisations in the public sector is based on delivering efficient services, ensuring transparency and accountability, developing trust in the government among the citizens, and developing meaningful chances of civic engagement. Applied to the local

governance, this theory does not just concern the operational efficiency but a larger question of how the institutions of the state provide a material value to the society. When applied to the area of digital governance, the public value theory stipulates that government websites do not act merely as technical tools or a storage of information; they are strategic areas of value creation. It is possible to minimize the information asymmetry between local authorities and citizens, increase the level of transparency in budgeting and procurement processes, improve access to the services of the local authority, and increase the level of participation of its citizens in local activities with the help of properly designed and content-rich LGA websites (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Therefore, the quality and relevance of information digitally determine the level at which the authorities of the local government realise their duties as mandated.

Web content would be extra crucial in the Tanzanian context, where the local level has been put under heavy service delivery and accountability pressures due to decentralisation. LGAs can enhance the strengthening of democratic accountability and trust via the provision of budgets, development plans, service standards, and mechanisms of participation in an easy-to-reach format on the Internet. Poor quality or narrowly focused websites, on the other hand, restrict the possibility of citizens checking performance and actively participating, hence weakening the process of generating public value. This paper thus takes the public value theory as its key prism to look at whether the content of the Tanzanian LGA websites is helping or hindering the fulfilment of the mandated roles of governance. The theory sets the direction of how to analyze the supply of information (what is published) and its perceived utility (how citizens and officials perceive it as useful). Finally, the framework assists in shedding light on the circumstances in which digital platforms pass from symbolic presence to being authentic means of enhanced local governance and value creation to the public.

2.1.2 Technology–Organization–Environment (TOE) framework

The Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework, which was initially suggested by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), offers a sound theoretical perspective through which technology adoption and implementation by organisations can be seen. The framework establishes three interdependent contexts, namely, technological, organisational, and environmental contexts, which all influence how organisations embrace and use new technologies. The present work uses the TOE framework to describe the variables that have affected the evolution, operation, and performance of official websites run by the Tanzanian local government authorities (LGAs) to enable them to fulfil their roles and duties that are mandated by the government. The TOE framework involves available internal and external technologies in an organisation, such as hardware, software, access to the internet, and technical infrastructure (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Baker, 2012). In the case of LGA websites, this aspect is comprised of the standards of the ICT infrastructure, web platforms, cybersecurity measures, and technical complexity needed to support the most recent and convenient digital interfaces. LGAs have high chances of producing dynamic websites that could provide timely and interactive public services when they have adequate technological resources.

The organisational context deals with internal variables like the size of the organisation, financial strength, support of the top management, the staff's digital capabilities, and the already existing content creation and maintenance processes (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990). The Tanzanian local government setting has numerous limitations, where most of the LGAs have limited budgets, a lack of ICT-trained individuals, and poor internal coordination systems, with all this preventing efficient development and updating of their websites. On the other hand, a greater organizational capacity allows councils to be responsible to the content of their websites in an effort to be more attuned to their statutory duties. However, the environmental context is the outside factors such as regulatory factors, government policies, demands of the stakeholders and socio-economic environment (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Baker, 2012). The following are part of this in Tanzania: national e-government directives made by the President's Office-Regulatory Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) and the e-Government Agency and increasing citizen expectations of online transparency and availability of services. The environmental factors may either encourage or limit LGAs when it comes to prioritising quality content on websites.

The TOE framework provides an overall explanation of the differences in quality and functionality of the websites in the Tanzanian LGAs by combining the organisational, environmental, and technological contexts. Finally, the framework assists in shedding light on the circumstances in which digital platforms can transition to symbolic presence to become efficient tools for improving transparency, accountability, and service delivery in local governance.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Public Web Site Implication to Local Governments

Take into account the example of public sector web sites as web sites which are the official places of online assembly where governments may share information, help offer services and interact with the people. The websites are the main point through which the local government authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania learn about the daily needs including the availability of services (like water supplies or health clinics) or the local budgets, development strategies, local laws (bylaws), awarding of contracts (procurement), and the performance of the council.

The LGA websites are also especially important to decentralised governance where power and responsibility are nearer to the people since they are directly involved in matters that directly affect the day-to-day lives of the people compared to large national government portals. Researchers separate three main types of internet contents (United Nations, 2022). Informational: basic information like laws, organisation structure and updates. Transactional: interactive elements that let you apply for services, send requests online, and pay bills. Participatory: tools to make input, attend meetings or make decisions. Research also suggests that most of the LGA websites in most developing countries including Tanzania are primarily informational, i.e. news and announcements, and have very little in terms of participation or transactions. This limits their actual role towards ensuring that they promote better governance (Omweri, 2024; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Ceremony events or essential news is often prioritised by councils in Tanzania especially, and more detailed, practical information like audited financial statements or service specifications are not addressed (Mtega, 2019).

2.2.2 Content on Websites and Real Governance Activities Theories

The two are E-Government Maturity Theory and Public Value Theory, and they are the two central pillars on which this work is founded. Public Value Theory is a theory that was introduced by Mark Moore during the year 1995 (Moore, 1995) that suggests that public organisations must focus on delivering real benefits to the society in form of more efficient services, greater transparency, greater accountability, and greater trust in the government and more opportunities to involve the citizens. In this view, however, a local government website is not merely a beautiful digital billboard; it is a strategic tool that can help or hinder the ability of the council to meet the legal requirements of the council.

E-government maturity models add another dimension, describing the progress of websites moving towards a simple (static pages with out-of-date information) and an advanced (totally interactive, integrated, and citizen centered) one. The further the site is developed concerning administration and democracy, the more convenient it is, offering unproblematic services, bilateral communication, and engagement (Layne & Lee, 2001; United Nations, 2022). Old content on websites with low maturity does not have much impact on openness or service provision. The institutional theory is the final component that helps us to remember that the appearance and functionality of these websites are predetermined by the expertise of the council, funds, regulations of the government, and the culture of the office (Scott, 2014). The theories illustrate that the calibre and type of contents contained on an LGA website have a direct influence on the level of accomplishment of the mandated roles of the council as mandated.

2.2.3 LGAs Websites and their Contents

The diversity and the scope of issues presented on a web site determine whether residents of the area are able to find what they require in order to communicate with their local government. Mandatory functions are important areas in the following: Service information (standards, procedures, etc.). Fiscal transparency (budgets, expenditure reports). News of planning and development. Contract award notifications. The way of how residents can be engaged (contact details regarding public meetings, feedback form, etc.). In Tanzania and other similar settings coverage is uneven. Most councils can be found offering news items and basic “about us” pages, but hardly any are easy to find and understand budgets, strategy plans, or performance reports (Peter & Nkunduma, 2024a). This gap complicates the process of all people, especially in the rural regions, keeping the track of the council performance and receiving fair access to the information presented by the government. Hypothesis 1 (H_1): There exist significant differences in the content that is published on Tanzanian LGA websites in terms of its types and scopes.

2.2.4 The Contents' Obligations on the Intended LGAs Functions

The local governments in Tanzania have their own legal obligations, which involve provision of services, proper management of funds, law upholding and attracting citizens to join. The well-written content of web pages can help in such activities by reducing the misunderstandings and information gaps. Examples Why People can get what they need faster with service policies and procedures are clear. Procurement information and budgets are transparent and this creates an assurance that the funds are being managed in the correct manner. The laws and regulations can be easily complied with. Nevertheless, the studies have always shown inconsistency: online material often cannot be reconciled with these primary tasks, especially at the local scale (Mtega, 2019; Omweri, 2024). This shows that the websites are not living up to their promise as a tool of better governance. Hypothesis 2 (H_2): When the content of the LGA website is more relevant to the council mandated tasks- and positive- there is a greater success of performance of those tasks.

2.2.5 Perceptions of the People Towards LGAs Websites

Existence of material is not enough but must be realistic and easy to use. Based on current studies on technology adoption, individuals stand a much greater chance of using and engaging with a platform when they feel it is easy and convenient (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2012). Although ordinary people often complain that the sites of Tanzanian cities are hard to navigate, old-fashioned, or irrelevant to real-life concerns, the authorities might perceive them as the

primary tick of a tick to meet the standards (Peter & Nnunduma, 2024b). Due to these differences of opinions, fewer people physically attend the locations and this makes their overall contribution to governance fewer. Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Among the governance outcomes, better services, openness, and engagement are only some of the results that should considerably rise when the content on the LGA website is convenient and useful to the officials and citizens.

2.2.6 Obstacles and Prospects of Enhancing Websites

The design of good LGA sites in developing countries is compromised due to various reasons, such as the insufficiency of technological knowledge, insufficient funding, vague content management rules, and the low importance of online transparency (Omweri, 2024; United Nations, 2022). There is also a shortage of employees who have been trained in online communication and the unevenness of the internet in remote areas (Mtega, 2019). Open government projects, national e-government initiatives and growing demand of online services by the population create real opportunities. Some of the solutions proposed by research include the creation of staff competence, the creation of national standards of content, and the increased accountability of institutions to their online presence (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Hypothesis 4 (H₄): The extent to which the LGA websites can help in the execution of the local government responsibilities is significantly enhanced in the instance where the institutional and technical barriers towards management of the websites are resolved.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Approach

Supported by a thorough examination of real LGA websites, this study employs a cross-sectional strategy with a primary quantitative focus. Cross-sectional research allows us to take a moment in time, which is ideal for examining the relationship between website content and the effectiveness of local governments in fulfilling their mandated responsibilities. The ideas can statistically be evaluated and make more generalizations about Tanzanian local government bodies (LGAs). In general, thanks to the quantitative side because it can handle complicated interactions, including direct effects, mediators (like stakeholder opinions), and moderators (like institutional capability) all at once, was selected structural equation modelling (SEM), more especially Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2019). All of this stems from public value theory and the concepts of e-government maturity: digital platforms only produce genuine public benefits when their content is pertinent, user-friendly, and supported by strong institutional backing. In order to evaluate those assumptions, survey responses were merged with hard data about the websites.

3.2 Context and Study Area

This was done in Tanzania, which is decentralised with its frontline activities being addressed by the local government authorities (LGAs). LGAs are also obligated by law to offer public services (water, health, and education), enhance local growth, ensure funds are spent in a responsible and transparent manner, and engage the community in decision-making. National policy, as a component of the effort to provide e-government to the nation, forbids LGAs to leave out an official public site. Tanzania is thus an ideal practical laboratory to test whether those websites are indeed helpful to the basic operations of the LGAs- or not.

3.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

The interest was on two major groups: Local government officials that work hand in hand with services and sites especially those located in the domains of administration, planning, ICT, finance and public relations; and those who are knowledgeable and use (or seek to use) these online platforms including community leaders, civil society members and ordinary LGA service users. The multi-stage sampling method was used in sampling participants. To start with, LGAs were selected purposely with variation of urban and rural councils (strata) having different administrative capabilities. The next step was convenience and purposive sampling that helped to find people who actually utilize LGAs websites and services in each of the chosen LGAs. The objective was to get more than 312 respondents. In the case of PLS-SEM models that have mediation and moderation routes, that is considerably larger than the recommended minimum; this gives a more statistical power and more reliable results (Hair et al., 2019).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

A structured questionnaire in the form of the five-point Likert scale, between strongly disagree and strongly agree, was the major data collection tool. The questionnaire was constructed based on modification of the measurement scales that are already validated in the literature on e-government, affecting the creation of public values, transparency, accountability in governance, and models of technology adoption. It was composed of five separate parts that summarized the main constructs of the study. The former version included an evaluation of the Website Content Scope and Thematic Composition (WCSC), defining the size and range of information on governance-related matters that is present on local government authority websites. The second part tested the Functional Relevancy of Website Content

(FRC) that determined how much the published material directly assisted the legal and required duty of the councils. The third part was the Stakeholder Perceptions of Usefulness and Accessibility (SP), which aimed at analyzing the opinion of the respondents concerning the usability, ease, reliability and general value of the websites. In the fourth part, Mandated Local Government Functions (MLGF) evaluated the perceived performance in the core areas of service delivery, financial transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. The last area examined was Institutional and Technical Factors (ITF), which covered the ICT infrastructure, leadership support, budgetary resources, and staff digital competencies.

The questionnaire was professionally translated into Kiswahili to achieve accessibility and inclusiveness for all the respondents in Tanzania, with special care being taken on the back-translations to ensure that the concepts and semantics were the same in both the English and Kiswahili versions. They were allowed freedom to respond to the survey online or by paper depending on their access to technology and their convenience. Along with the survey data, a literary content analysis was performed on the official sites of the identified local government authorities. This dual-nature method helped the researchers to juxtapose the perceptions of the stakeholders against the objective evidence of what was on the websites or what was not, which contributed to the validity and depth of the results.

3.5 Instrument Validation and Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was tested on 30 to 50 participants in a pilot study to determine the clarity, consistency and construct validity of the questionnaire. The pilot respondents provided feedback that led to slight adjustments to the phrasing and wording of some of the items, but the concept and theoretical meaning of the questions were not altered. Then the accuracy and validity of the measurement model were strictly tested with the Smart PLS software. Internal consistency was also established since both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were found to be more than the recommended value of 0.70 across all constructs. Convergent validity was formed with the help of the average variance extracted (AVE), and all the constructs have values higher than 0.50. Both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to determine discriminant validity, and it was found that the constructs were empirically different. Having completed all the set psychometric standards, the researchers went to the main survey and structural model analysis with the confidence of the soundness of the tool.

3.6 Variable Measurement

Since all of the study's main conceptions were regarded as reflecting latent variables, the observed indicators are thought to be expressions of the underlying theoretical structures. Put differently, each hidden variable's conceptual meaning was intended to be captured and reflected in the survey items. The degree to which local government websites offer thorough and easily accessible information on important aspects of governance, such as budgets, development initiatives, public services, and other administrative tasks, is the first construct, presentation and coverage of information on the website. This construct evaluates the depth and scope of information revealed on the websites.

The degree to which the content on local government websites complies with and supports the councils' operational and statutory responsibilities is captured by the second component, functional relevance. Stakeholder opinions are also taken into account, especially with relation to the online information's timeliness, usefulness, accessibility, and dependability. The actual governance outcomes linked to efficient information disclosure are represented by the third construct, mandated local government functions. These outcomes include better service delivery, increased citizen participation in local governance processes, improved accountability, and increased budget transparency. Lastly, the enabling circumstances that for efficient website administration and digital information distribution are referred to as technological and institutional elements. These include leadership support for digital governance initiatives, organisational preparedness, and the availability of suitable technology infrastructure. To improve measurement reliability and reduce measurement error, the survey instrument includes numerous indicators for each construct in accordance with accepted best practices in structural equation modelling (SEM).

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

PLS-SEM of Smart PLS version 4 was used to do all the analysis. Researchers decided to use PLS-SEM because of its performance in complex models in the case of mediation and moderation, its capability to deal with non-normal data, and its compatibility with the exploratory and predictive work (Hair et al. 2019). The common two-step process was employed: Measurement model: verified discriminant validity, convergent validity, reliability and indicator loadings.

The structural model analysed path coefficients, explained variance (R^2), effect sizes (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2). Bootstrapping was also used to verify the hypotheses and this option was adopted as the test provided 5,000 resamples to test the significance with the required reliability. The indirect effects were considered to mediate on and employed two-stage approach in Smart PLS to produce terms of interaction to be used in moderation.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The purpose of the research was clarified at the beginning to all respondents. The informed consent was available, provided total anonymity (no names and identifiers were taken), and guaranteed that the data could be used as a part of academic research only. The respondents could leave whenever they wished.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Review and Preliminary Data Screening

The data was properly scrutinized in regard to whether there were any issues prior to conducting the main analysis. The number of the missing values (under 5 percent) was relatively low; so, researchers could cope with them using simple mean replacement. The values of variance inflation factor (VIF) were much less than 3.3 (Hair et al. 2021), which means that no major problem of common technique bias should appear when checked the issue of multicollinearity. Respondents were comprised of a decent mix of local government representatives (who included those in administration, planning, ICT, finance and communications) and informed individuals (community leaders, members of civil society and ordinary consumers of the services they provided). These were of a diverse urban and rural local government bodies (LGAs) and hence the real differences could be recorded in the way people perceive the content, usability and governance results of websites.

4.2 Assessment of the Measurement Model

Before analyzing the important links, researchers had first ensured that the survey questions measured the desired outcomes by assessing their validity and reliability (Figure 2).

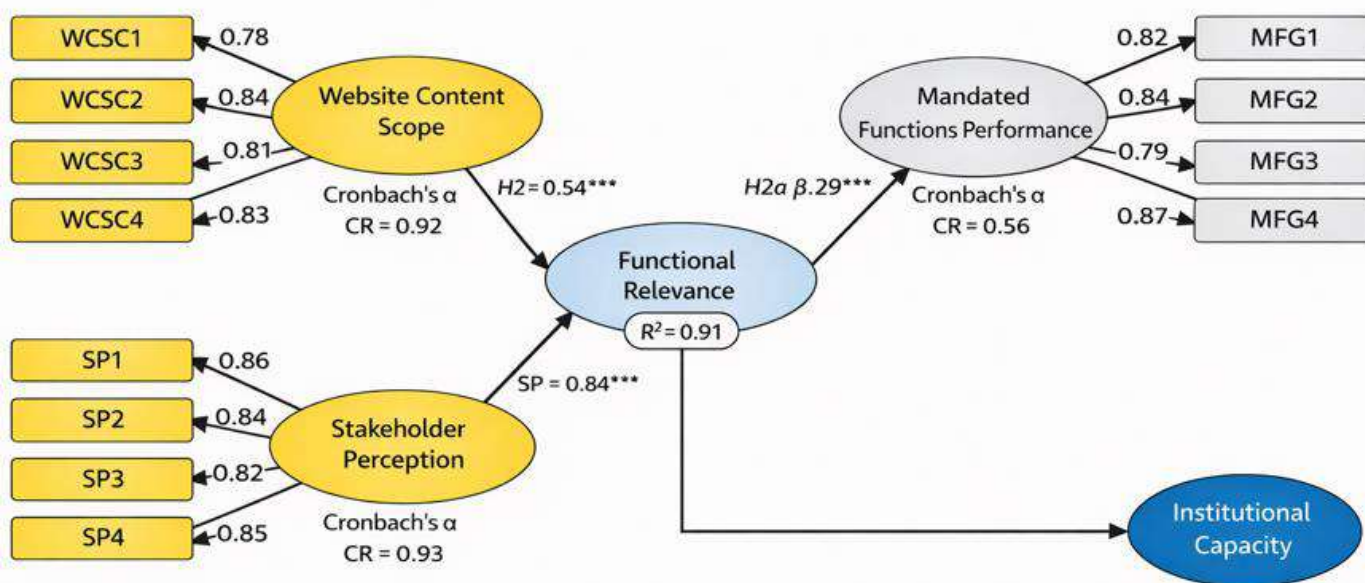


Figure 2
Measurement Model with Standardized Outer Loadings

4.2.1 Reliability of Indicators

In the surveys, there was a heavy loading of each survey item to a construct. The standardised loads were quite beyond the usual 0.70 threshold with values of 0.78 to 0.85 as Table 1 shows (Hair et al., 2019). This means that no question had any misplaced meaning. Every one made a contribution, and so, nothing was dropped.

4.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α) were used to determine how the items were consistently hanging together. Alphas between 0.85 and 0.91 and CR between 0.89 and 0.94 with a comfortable range of 0.70 (Table 1). Therefore, the five main constructs developed were internally sound and reliable; Institutional and Technical Factors (ITF), Stakeholder Perceptions (SP), Mandated Local Government Functions (MLGF), Functional Relevance of Content (FRC), and Website Content Scope and Composition (WCSC).

Table 1
Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE	Interpretation
Website Content Scope	0.89	0.92	0.65	Acceptable
Functional Relevance	0.87	0.91	0.63	Acceptable
Stakeholder Perception	0.90	0.93	0.68	Acceptable
Institutional Capacity	0.85	0.89	0.60	Acceptable
Mandated Functions Performance	0.91	0.94	0.70	Acceptable

4.2.3 Validity Convergence

Convergent validity refers to the ability of the items in each construct to explain the common variance. The range of values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was between 0.60 and 0.70 in a friendly manner above the 0.50 benchmark (Table 1) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The basic idea in itself in each set of questions explained nearly half of the diversity.

4.2.4 Validity of Discrimination

Two of the checks that we used to ensure that the constructs were not extremely overlapping were the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio range between 0.59 and 0.78 (Table 2) all values below the tight 0.85 cut-off Henseler et al. (2015) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3), square root of AVE larger than any cross-construct correlation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results confirm that WCS, FRC, SP, MLGF and ITF share more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs, thereby satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity.

Table 2
Discriminant Validity: HTMT Ratio

Construct	WCS	FR	SP	IC	MFP
WCS	-	0.62	0.58	0.55	0.60
FR		-	0.64	0.59	0.67
SP			-	0.61	0.69
IC				-	0.63
MFP					-

Table 3
Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	WCS	FR	SP	IC	MFP
Website Content Scope (WCS)	0.81				
Functional Relevance (FR)	0.54	0.79			
Stakeholder Perception (SP)	0.48	0.51	0.82		
Institutional Capacity (IC)	0.46	0.49	0.45	0.77	
Mandated Functions Performance (MFP)	0.59	0.63	0.55	0.52	0.84

Note: Diagonal values represent the square root of AVE.

4.3 Structural Models Assessment

Structural models can be examined by determining the main factors that can give rise to a particular problem and evaluating the actual case factors with the aim to ascertain their contribution to the problem. Once the measurement model had been cleared, the focus was shifted to the structural side, looking at how the components are related to each other and to what degree they explain the real outcome.

4.3.1 Determination Coefficient (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) shows the percentage of the explanatory power that the model has. The model clearly explained key outcomes (Table 4). It was a moderate, albeit significant, explanatory of functional relevance of content ($R^2 = 0.29$). More importantly, it contributed 56 percent of the change in mandated local government functions ($R^2 = 0.56$), which is quite a considerable percentage when it comes to this type of social science study. That is, the delivery of services by Tanzanian LGAs, their transparency, responsibility, and interaction with the residents are significantly determined by factors that concern the content and perception of the visitors in terms of the web pages.

Table 4*Coefficient of Determination (R^2)*

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Interpretation
Functional Relevance	0.29	Moderate
Mandated Functions Performance	0.56	Substantial

4.4 Testing Hypotheses

The five hypotheses were tested using t-statistics, p-values of bootstrapping (5,000 resamples), and path coefficients (b). The results are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5*Structural Model Path Coefficients*

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H ₁	WCS → MFP	0.31	4.87	<0.001	Supported
H ₂	WCS → FR	0.54	9.21	<0.001	Supported
H ₃	FR → MFP	0.29	4.12	<0.001	Supported
H ₄	SP → MFP	0.35	5.43	<0.001	Supported
H ₅	FR × IC → MFP	0.18	2.76	0.006	Supported

4.4.1 Effect of the Website Content Composition and Scope on the Functions necessary (H₁)

Some of the key governance responsibilities could be enhanced with broader and more diverse content on the sites, according to H₁. The positive and very significant direct relationship between WCS and MFP was positive ($b = 0.31$, $t = 4.87$, $p < 0.001$), supported. Councils that offer more beneficial information online (budgets, programs, services, channels of participation) tend to significantly improve in terms of openness, service delivery, accountability, and engagement with the public.

4.4.2 The Mediating Role of Website Content Relevance (H₂)

H₂ was the following question, Does the relevance of the content to the actual legal requirements contribute to the better results of wider content? In fact, indirect influence was favourable and significant with FR ($b = 0.54$, $t = 9.21$, $p = 0.001$). This illustrates a partial mediation effect: the effect of a lot of material is positively affected, but more so when the material is directly connected to what legally the council should do (e.g. open procurement notices, clearly defined service standards). H₂ is supported.

4.4.3 The Effect of Functional Relevance on Mandated Functional Performance (H₃)

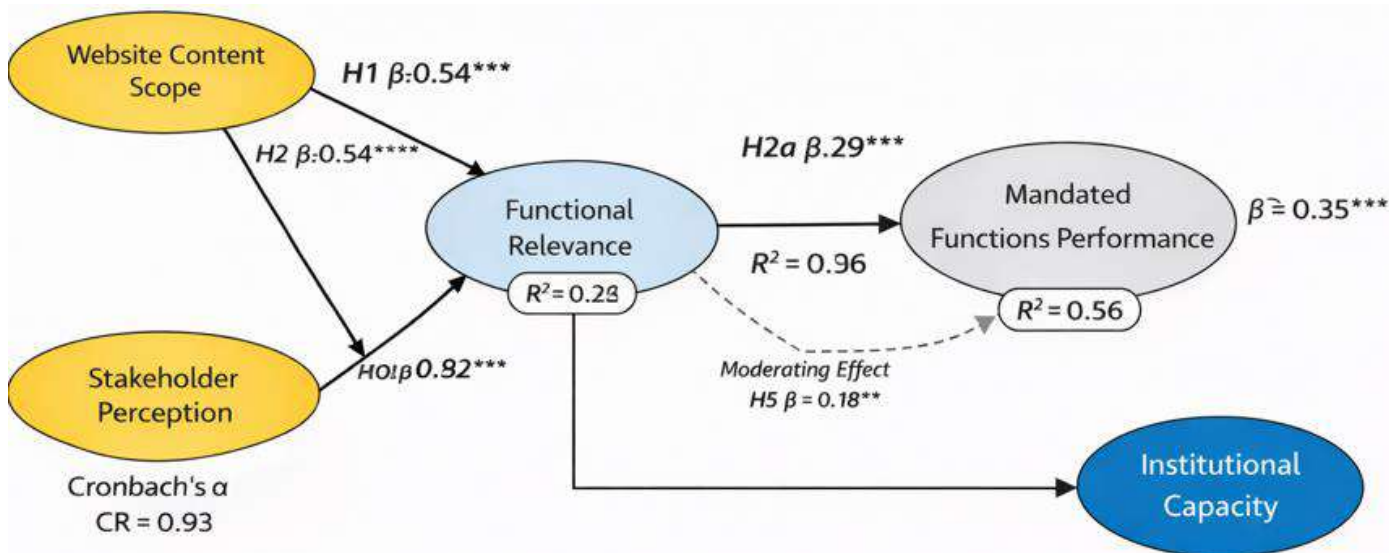
H₃ was on the usefulness of the site and its accessibility-to bring some real people and experiences to the table. In fact, direct influence was favourable and significant with FR ($b = 0.29$, $t = 4.12$, $p = 0.001$). H₃ is supported.

4.4.4 The effects of Stakeholder Perceptions on the Necessary Functions (H₄)

H₄ focused on the significance of the opinion of people. The correlation between stakeholder perceptions (SP) and mandated local government functions (MFP) was significant and obvious ($b = 0.35$, $t = 5.43$, $p < 0.001$). The outcomes of governance greatly enhance when authorities and citizens consider that the website is in current, reliable, and accessible, and helpful. Perceptions are an important driving force and not a like-to-have. H₄ is supported.

4.4.5 The Moderate Role of Institutional and Technical Factors (H₅)

H₅ states that such factors as ICT infrastructure, well-trained staff, leadership, and effective content policies will enhance the influence of the relevant material. The $b = 0.18$, $t = 2.76$, $p < 0.001$ value was significant and positive (Figure 3). Therefore, where there is a respectable technical infrastructure and institutional backing in the LGA, the functional relevance of the content of the websites will have a more positive effect on governance. Good content is lost even when these supports are bad. H₅ is verified.



Note: ***p=0.001, **p = 0.01

Figure 3
Structural Model with Path Coefficients and R² Values

4.4.6 Robustness Tests

The SRMR (Standardised Root Mean Square Residual) measures the "difference between the expected and actual covariance matrices" and indicates a good fit if it's less than 0.08 (Henseler et al., 2015). In this case, both the "estimated and the saturated models" had SRMRs of 0.061 which is less than 0.08 (Table 6), signifying an acceptable fit. The calculated GoF value of 0.53 exceeds the recommended threshold for a large global model fit (0.36), indicating that the model demonstrates strong explanatory power in explaining the relationships between public website content, functional relevance, institutional capacity, stakeholder perceptions, and the performance of mandated local government functions. This suggests that the model provides a robust representation of the empirical relationships examined in the study (Wetzels et al., 2009).

Table 6
Model Fit Indices

Index	Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.061	< 0.08	Good fit
NFI	0.91	> 0.90	Acceptable

These results suggest that the structural model demonstrates adequate global model fit.

4.4.5 Effect Size (f²)

Effect size analysis was conducted to determine the relative impact of each exogenous construct on endogenous variables. According to Hair et al. (2021), f² values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects respectively. Table 7 shows the comparative effect of exogenous variables on endogenous constructs. "The effect size analysis" shows that "website content scope" had the "largest effect" on "functional relevance" followed by "stakeholders' perception on "mandated functions".

Table 7
Effect Size (f²)

Path	f ²	Effect Size
Website Content Scope → Functional Relevance	0.32	Medium
Website Content Scope → Mandated Functions	0.18	Medium
Functional Relevance → Mandated Functions	0.16	Medium
Stakeholder Perception → Mandated Functions	0.21	Medium
Institutional Capacity (Moderation)	0.07	Small

The results show that website content scope and stakeholder perception exert moderate effects, while the moderating role of institutional capacity has a small but meaningful effect.

4.4.6 “Predictive Relevance (Q²)”

Using the “blindfolding procedure”, the predictive values were all “greater than zero” (Table 8). The Q² value for functional relevance (0.19) and Mandated functions performance (0.34) were both significantly greater than zero (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 8

Predictive Relevance (Q² Values)

Endogenous Construct	Q ² Value	Interpretation
Functional Relevance	0.19	Moderate predictive relevance
Mandated Functions Performance	0.34	Strong predictive relevance

These results confirm that the structural model possesses adequate predictive capability.

4.5 Discussion

The results of the current study are highly empirical in supporting the main points proposed in the analyzed literature, along with some significant extensions. In line with the concept of Public Value Theory (Moore, 1995; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019), the findings show that the LGA websites in Tanzania are not just symbolic digital platforms but strategic tools which have the potential to create real public value. In cases where the content of a website is detailed, functionally oriented as required by its mandate, viewed as useful and available to stakeholders, and backed by sufficient institutional and technical capacity, the website content contributes greatly to service delivery, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. This confirms directly this argument of Moore that the value generated by the organisations when they are publicly operated is the enhancement of their efficiency, transparency, trust, and civic participation.

The research also has a high level of e-government maturity model resonance (Layne & Lee, 2001; United Nations, 2022). The majority of LGA Tanzanian websites are at the initial stage of informational level, which is usually filled with news and announcements, as noted by Mtega (2019) and Omweri (2024). But the current results go beyond this to demonstrate that going up a notch in terms of maturity (functionally relevant, interactive and participatory content) creates quantifiable gains in terms of governance outcomes. The large mediating role of functional relevance reaffirms that, based on the content breadth itself, it would not suffice; information needs to be systematically structured to meet legal requirements to be translated into practical administrative and democratic benefits.

Moreover, the results are consistent with and complementary to previous Tanzanian research. Although Peter and Nnunduma (2024) emphasize the beneficial, however disproportionate, role of ICT tools in the context of transparency and efficiency, this study gives more specific evidence by connecting particular content features (scope, relevance, and perceived usefulness) to the functions mandated by the new law. The institutional and technical moderating power is also a strong factor in support of the institutional theory (Scott, 2014) and prior observations that the difference in the e-government output observed in the contexts of developing countries is largely attributed to resource limitations and capacity disparities.

In general, this work fills a significant gap in the literature. Although previous studies have mostly focused on the overall e-government adoption or technical issues, the current study methodically explains the quality and functional usefulness of web-based content in the tangible governance results at the localized level. The results more effectively capture the contextual specifics of the role of digital platforms in delivering effective tools to local governance in Tanzania and other contextually based sub-Saharan African countries based on the TOE framework through incorporating the Public Value Theory and e-government maturity models.

4.5.1 Content Scope and Features of Websites that are Required

The results offer great empirical evidence for Hypothesis 1 and are in agreement with the overall literature on e-government and the creation of public values. The statistics affirm a strong positive correlation between the breadth and scope of spread of the site content and the efficient running of mandated local government functions. Where local government authorities publish more detailed information, such as budgets, development plans, bylaws, procurement notices, and service standards, significantly better standards of transparency, accountability, service delivery and citizen participation are realised. This outcome is in line with the previous literature that highlights the inherent significance of information availability in bridging the knowledge gap between government and citizens (Mtega, 2019). In the decentralised governance system in Tanzania, where day-to-day service delivery by LGAs has to work with extremely limited resources, these types of online disclosure can be used to level the playing field by allowing citizens to track how local resources are spent, learn what services are available, and become increasingly interested parties in local politics. These consequences are direct outcomes of the previously developed mechanism of the creation of public values developed by Moore (1995) and further detailed by Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019). Simultaneously, the results

reflect the general trends in the developing world: although digital openness tends to enhance the state of governance, the process is not uniform across local administrations, with institutional capacity differences being one of the primary reasons (Omweri, 2024; Peter & Nkunduma, 2024). Therefore, the current research does not only confirm previous theoretical assumptions but also gives context-related evidence in the Tanzanian local government environment, both in the possibility and the existing constraints of the site content as a means to enforce local governance.

4.5.2 The Intermediating Role of Content Relevance of the Web Sites

The findings are very much in favour of Hypothesis 2 and give a relevant twist to the current literature on e-government. Although wider information on a website alone has a positive impact on governance performance, its effect is greatly enhanced when it can be functionally coordinated with the legal requirements of local governance authorities. Open budgets lead to better financial transparency and trust in the government; better pronounced service standards and procedures lead to better service delivery; published bylaws enable easy adherence to regulatory requirements; and the availability of participation mechanisms increases citizen engagement. Essentially, functional relevance is a serious conduit which converts the passive informational content into the active governance instruments.

Such a result aligns with models of e-government maturity, according to which the real benefits become evident only at the point when digital platforms are beyond the informational level of development and turn into more functional, interactive, and network-oriented (Layne & Lee, 2001; United Nations, 2022). According to previous research, the Tanzanian LGAs are still at the primitive level and focus more on the news announcements and formal proclamations than on providing substantial information that can directly underpin their statutory mandate (Mtega, 2019; Omweri, 2024). The current research is important as it empirically illustrates the mediating nature of functional relevance by contrasting with the past studies that have mostly concentrated on sheer access, adoption rates, or technical usefulness (Peter & Nkunduma, 2024). It gives a more sophisticated approach to how the content of websites can affect governance results, with the importance of functional alignment as a hitherto neglected but critical requirement in achieving public value in decentralised situations.

By doing it, this study builds upon Public Value Theory (Moore, 1995; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019) by demonstrating that the realisation of a public value does not occur once digital platforms are present but rather is achieved when such content is purposely created to facilitate the particular functions that local governments legally have to perform. The mediation effect therefore bridges a significant gap in the literature and provides a more detailed explanation as to why certain LGA websites generate significant governance change and so many others tend to be predominantly symbolic.

4.5.3 Stakeholder and Governance Outcomes Views

Procedures through which the users interact with the websites in reality were the strongest direct factors that contributed to better governance (H_3). The outcomes regarding services, responsibility, openness, and engagement are much better when the authorities and locals consider the material to be up-to-date, reliable, and useful. This element of human factor is necessary as even great content cannot be used if it is hard to operate, if it is outdated, or it appears to be unworthy. The final result is aligned to popular models like the UTAUT and the Technology Acceptance Model: perceived usefulness is the real cause of actual usage and effect (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2012). In Tanzania, the importance of usability and clarity is considerably greater as the gap in digital literacy, access, and connectivity (between rural and urban areas) is quite high. Although websites can be redesigned into a genuine interaction tool and help in the creation of public value, bad design or lack of attention may further divide people and decrease trust.

4.5.4 The Moving Impact of the Technical and Institutional Factors

Finally, institutional and technical realities either consolidate or weaken the positive impact of relevant material (in support of H_4). The websites of LGAs are much more beneficial in terms of governance in case they possess a sufficient ICT infrastructure, competent staff, supportive leadership, and clear content policies. It is in line with the institutional theory that opines that organisational culture, resources, and capacity considerably affect the implementation of policies in real-life scenarios (Scott, 2014). The same fantastic information has a lesser effect in low-resource councils, which are common in rural Tanzania, due to bad administration, patchy internet, or lack of skill. Although these frameworks are similar, the diversity between LGAs is quite high and it can be argued that the local capacity defines the performance whereas the national policies establish the environment.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to answer an important question; Are the public websites largely symbolic or do they help the Tanzanian LGAs in the execution of their legal mandate? The response is not very complex, these websites can become useful devices of better service delivery, transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement when the

information is detailed and functionally connected to core functions, considered useful and easily accessible to users, and backed by high levels of institutional capacity. The local government in Tanzania is decentralised and therefore, the public websites can greatly enhance the local government. Provided that leaders choose to invest intentionally in the content strategy, usability and supporting infrastructure, they will go beyond the digital bill board role, and become active participants in the creation of public value.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings can indicate feasible policy measures on the part of policymakers, national organisations (e-Government Authority and PO-RALG), and LGAs: Place priority on service standards, budgets, procurement notices, performance reports and involvement channels on your web page instead of announcements and PR. Build on existing e-government strategies by developing national standardised requirements of LGA sites to ensure that there is minimum transparency and quality. Put usability and accessibility into top priority. In order to bridge the digital divide and change perceptions, invest in user-friendly design, regular updates, mobile compatibility, and support of multiple languages (English and Kiswahili). Build the institutional capacity through offering employees specialised training on ICT, reserving funds towards site maintenance, and having the leadership endorsements on ensuring gains are sustained. Narrow the rural-urban divide by enhancing the reliability of connectivity and digital literacy programs to ensure that people and not only urban dwellers can use the internet. They coincide with the plans of Tanzania decentralisation, e-government as well as more general plans of the public trust, inclusive development, and service delivery.

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