

The extent to which e-governance platforms enhance transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania: Evidence from Benjamini Mkapa Hospital, Dodoma

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the extent to which e-Governance platforms enhance transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania, drawing on empirical evidence from Benjamini Mkapa Hospital in Dodoma. Guided by the Principal-Agent Theory, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques within a cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) beneficiaries, NHIF employees, information and communication technology (ICT) officers, and e-Governance managers at the hospital. The study population was 1000 people while data were collected from 128 respondents selected through stratified random sampling and administered structured questionnaires, and 15 key informants selected through purposive sampling and engaged through semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that e-Governance platforms significantly improved transparency in public sector organisations. Respondents agreed that digital systems enhanced access to public information, improved service delivery quality, and reduced bureaucratic opacity. Specifically, the NHIF online membership verification system, electronic claims processing platform, and digital payment gateway contributed to greater transactional traceability and reduced opportunities for corruption and information manipulation. Key informants further confirmed that digital platforms minimised physical interactions between citizens and public officials, thereby strengthening institutional openness. However, transparency gains were tempered by persistent infrastructure deficiencies, including unstable internet connectivity, limited ICT equipment, and unreliable electricity supply, alongside low digital literacy among some users. The study concludes that e-Governance platforms are effective instruments for advancing transparency in Tanzania's public sector, though their full potential is contingent on sustained investment in digital infrastructure and human capital development. The study recommends that Tanzania government should make investments in ICT infrastructure to all public institutions, especially in rural and peri-urban areas to ensure reliable internet connectivity, stable electricity supply and adequate ICT equipment to enable consistent delivery of e-Governance services.

Keywords: e-Governance, Transparency, Public Sector Organisations, Digital Platforms, Tanzania, Principal-Agent Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

E-Governance has emerged as a major tool for transposing transparency and accountability in public sector organisations throughout the world. Worldwide, over 190 countries have implemented digital government services, and about 70 percent have created online platforms that enable the delivery of public services and citizen engagement. (United Nations, 2022) Established e-Governance infrastructures like those of Estonia and Singapore have shown how digital systems can enhance government accountability and transparency, decrease corruption, and improve public trust in government, by making government processes more open and transparent (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). They have spurred a growing interest in digital governance as a means to improve transparency of public institutions.

In sub-Saharan Africa, e-Governance is recognized as a key tool for the modernisation of public governance and minimisation of the opacity often associated with traditional governance processes. According to the African Union (2020), more than 60 per cent of African countries have created national digital government strategies aimed at efficiency gains and improved transparency. Some platforms like Rwanda's Irembo and Kenya's eCitizen have shown improvements in access to government information and reductions in service delivery timeliness (World Bank, 2021; Ndou, 2004). However, the region is still facing major issues such as access to information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, low internet penetration, and ongoing digital literacy gaps that hinder access to digital services equitably (International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2023).

The Government has been working on digital transformation in Tanzania since the inception of the e-Government Authority (e-GA) in 2012 (Tanzania e-Government Authority, 2022). There are also a number of key platforms such as the Government Electronic Payment Gateway (GePG), the Tanzania National e-Procurement System

(TANePS) and the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) e-service platform, which are designed to improve the efficiency of service delivery and ensure accountability of institutions (World Bank, 2021; Yonazi et al., 2010). Yet, there is limited empirical evidence of such platforms' contribution to transparency in public sector organisations. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022), less than a quarter of citizens are making use of online government services, and 61 percent of citizens are not aware of the services, pointing to limited realisation of transparency benefits of e-Governance.

In light of this, the aim of this study was to determine to what extent the e-Governance platforms can increase transparency within public sector organisations in Tanzania, specifically at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital in the city of Dodoma as a study site. The hospital was chosen due to the fact that it is a part of the NHIF digital service platform deployment that is a major e-Governance implementation in the public health sector. The results of this study provide empirical information to the growing body of literature on digital governance in Tanzania and can provide practical guidance to decision makers and public administrators on how leveraging e-Governance can be an instrument of transparency.

While a number of e-Governance platforms have been implemented in public sector in Tanzania, there is a limited number of empirical studies exploring the extent of impact these platforms have on the transparency of public institutions in Tanzania. Just 25 percent of the population have used online government services, and public trust in government institutions is low, with only 40 percent of Tanzanians saying they trust the government is transparent and accountable (Meli et al., 2024). The apparent contradiction between digital investment and limited transparency perception is a good one to consider: How can we trust that what we are seeing is truly increasing the openness of the public sector or is we are just seeing a digital form of the same old obscurities?

In Tanzania, existing research have largely concentrated on the adoption of ICTs, provision of digital services and operational efficiency, thus limiting the investigation of how e-Governance helps to enhance transparency in public sector organisations to understanding its general pathways. Tanzania ranks 13th out of 26 countries in Africa on the Digital Skills Gap Index (2021) at 3.3/10, indicating a lack of digital literacy that may further limit citizens' capacity to use e-Governance for accountability. This study helps fill these gaps with empirical and qualitative evidence on the level of transparency attainment in e-Governance platforms based on the experience of NHIF beneficiaries and hospital officials at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital.

1.1 Research Objective

The specific objective guiding this study was to assess the extent to which e-Governance platforms enhance transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Principal-Agent Theory

The Principal-Agent Theory serves as the conceptual basis for this study as it is well suited to the analysis of the issue transparency and accountability in public sector organisations. The theory is based on the premise that a person the principal gives authority to another person the agent – to perform the duties of the principal (Mitchell & Meacham, 2011; Gailmard, 2014). In public administration, citizens are the principals and elected officials and public servants are considered as agents. The theory is devoted to a central problem: agency problems caused by information asymmetry, in which agents have more information about their actions and decisions than the principals, leading to opportunities for inefficiency, corruption, and hindering the use of public resources (Khaile et al., 2021; Bovens, 2007; Schedler, 1999).

The Principal – Agent Theory is fitting for this study as the e-Governance platforms could be used to reduce the information asymmetry by providing citizens with access to government information through digital service portals, electronic records, and online payments (Andersen, 2009; Bertot et al., 2010). Digital platforms increase transparency in government transactions by making them more visible and traceable, creating conditions that are more in favour of transparency in government transactions. The theory thus gives the conceptual foundation to understand how e-Governance system is used to mitigate opacity in public sector operation at Benjamini Mkapa hospital.

2.1.2 Complementary Theoretical Perspectives

This study is based on two complementary frameworks in addition to the Principal-Agent Theory. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) accounts for technology adoption in terms of constructs that are directly related to willingness to interact with e-Governance platforms to improve transparency: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT) (Rogers, 2003) also sheds light on the factors that affect the spread of digital platforms in public institutions and among the users of services, including the attributes of e-Governance systems including relative advantage, compatibility and simplicity. These

frameworks offer a multi-dimensional perspective to analyse e-Governance system adoption and its transparency in Tanzania.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 e-Governance and Transparency in the Public Sector

Transparency is in the center of the e-Governance and governance reform literature. The qualitative research conducted by Bertot et al. (2010) showed that e-Government tools that make budget information available to the public do have an impact on citizens' perception of government openness (Cuillier & Piotrowski, 2009). Also, quantitative evidence indicates that countries that have enacted open data policies have achieved a 30 per cent rise in citizen engagement, and a noticeable reduction in corruption (Andersen, 2009). In Tanzania, for instance, the adoption of electronic systems of procurement has been linked to an estimated 25 percent decline in corruption in procurement, showing the concrete benefits of the use of digital systems for increasing transparency.

Also, research on digital payment systems backs the transparency aspect of e-Governance. In Tanzania, the Government Electronic Payment Gateway (GePG) has been shown to have reduced the amount of cash transactions and increased accountability in government revenue collection processes (World Bank, 2021). Likewise, TANePS has enhanced transparency in procurement processes by allowing online tendering, electronic tendering, and transparency in the tendering process. As in the Principal-Agent framework, the platforms limit the scope of manipulation of administrative data, and enhance the traceability of the actions taken by the government, which is also consistent with the aim of ensuring that there is less information asymmetry.

2.2.2 Service Quality and User Satisfaction as Indicators of Transparency

A key measure of the effectiveness of an e-Governance platform and hence the transparency that it creates is user satisfaction and service quality. DeLone and McLean (2003) found that users appreciate service which makes the process easier to complete and time spent less, while around 78 percent were satisfied with e-Governance services in set conditions where systems were user friendly and responsive (Petter et al., 2008). Improved levels of service quality increase the level of public confidence and promote ongoing use of a digital service, leading to a virtuous circle whereby increased usage leads to increased accountability. Likewise, the World Bank (2021) shows that e-Governance systems in Kenya that are accessible and designed well have a significant impact on citizens' perceptions of government transparency and responsiveness.

2.2.3 Accessibility of Information and Institutional Openness

Information is a key element of transparency in public administration. The findings of the qualitative research done by Jaeger (2006) suggest that language barriers and complicated technical language can hinder citizens from accessing e-Governance platforms, whereas their quantitative study illustrates that providing the government information in multiple languages can broaden the use of this service by minority groups by about 40 percent (Fountain, 2001). The United Nations (2022) e-Government Survey noted that digital government systems enhance the efficiency of public administration and ensure institutional transparency by facilitating service delivery and making information more accessible in Tanzania. These transparency gains are, however, not universal due to enduring urban-rural digital divides, especially affecting rural populations (World Bank, 2021; ITU, 2023; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014).

2.3 Research Gap

Although there is considerable evidence of the transparency-enhancing properties of e-Governance systems on a global scale and in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, empirical studies specifically focused on how e-Governance platforms contribute to enhancing transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania are not abundant. Existing research has focused mainly on the issues of ICTs adoption, provision of digital services and efficiency of operation and ignored the mechanisms by which e-Governance brings institutional openness. In addition, while the health sector has received substantial investment in NHIF digital platforms, limited attention has been paid to the health sector as a place where e-Governance can be implemented. This study aims to fill these gaps by fixing the transparency implications of NHIF e-service platforms at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The current study employed a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, in a cross-sectional survey design. The mixed approach was deemed suitable to gather both quantitative data on the perception of e-Governance transparency of the respondents and qualitative data in-depth from the institutional key informants. The quantitative data was captured through the Likert type scale, which enabled the actors' level of agreement with the statements to be measured, while the qualitative data was collected through semi structured

interviews with ICT officers, NHIF managers and e-Governance officials which added explanatory depth and context to the data. The study adopted a pragmatist research philosophy, which advocates for the use of various research methods to produce holistic findings that are also action oriented and aim to address governance issues.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital in Dodoma, Tanzania, focusing on the NHIF e-service platforms used by beneficiaries of the National Health Insurance Fund. The hospital was chosen due to the fact that it is a major implementation of digital government services in the public health sector and had direct access to both the users of the services and the management of the e-Governance systems.

3.3 Target Population

The target population included 1000 people who were NHIF beneficiaries, NHIF employees, ICT officers and e-Governance managers at the hospital, all of whom were directly engaged in the implementation and use of the digital platforms.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The method used to select respondents for the questionnaire was stratified random sampling which allows a proportionate representation of the various strata of the target population. The individuals were identified using the purposive sampling technique and then 15 key informants were selected for semi-structured interviews which included NHIF officers, ICT officers and e-Governance managers with specific experience in digital systems management. The return rate for the 200 questionnaires that were sent was 64 percent, with 128 questionnaires being returned. Interviews were conducted with all 15 key informants for an interview response rate of 100%.

3.5 Data Collection

Primary data were gathered using structured questionnaires filled by NHIF beneficiaries and employees and semi-structured questionnaires filled by the key informants. A five-point likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to gauge the perceptions of respondents regarding the improvement of transparency through the use of e-Governance platforms.

3.6 Data Analysis

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, the instruments were evaluated by experts and for reliability the research instruments were evaluated by using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores (with reference to a predetermined scale) were used to analyze quantitative data. The analysis of qualitative data was done through thematic analysis where the responses from the interviews were grouped into themes corresponding to the objective of the study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from Mzumbe University, and a research permit was secured from the management of Benjamini Mkapa Hospital prior to data collection. Informed consent was sought from all respondents and key informants before their participation, and participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any stage without any consequence. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents and key informants were maintained throughout the study by excluding personal identifiers and using coded designations in place of names when reporting interview responses. All data collected were used strictly for academic purposes and were stored securely to protect the privacy of participants.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic features of the 128 respondents who took part in the study. There was a relatively even gender distribution; the male and female respondents represented 53.1 percent and 46.9 percent respectively of the sample, allowing for the inclusion of a variety of gender perspectives in the data. The majority of the respondents were in the age group of 26 to 35 years (42.2%), indicating that the group most likely to use NHIF digital services is the working age population. In terms of education qualifications, the majority of respondents had a diploma (29.7%) or degree qualification (25.8%), which suggests that the study population had relatively high levels of formal education. As far as the period of NHIF beneficiaries' membership is concerned, 37.5 per cent of the respondents had been beneficiaries for over six years, showing that they were familiar with the development of the NHIF service delivery and were able to offer informed opinions on the transition from manual to digital systems.

Table 1*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=128)*

Variable	Classification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	68	53.1
	Female	60	46.9
	Total	128	100.0
Age Group	18–25 years	18	14.1
	26–35 years	54	42.2
	36–45 years	34	26.6
	46–55 years	16	12.5
	56 years and above	6	4.7
	Total	128	100.0
Education Level	Primary Education	5	3.9
	Secondary Education	21	16.4
	Diploma	38	29.7
	Degree	33	25.8
	Postgraduate	31	24.2
	Total	128	100.0
Duration as NHIF Beneficiary	Less than 1 year	14	10.9
	1–3 years	31	24.2
	4–6 years	35	27.3
	More than 6 years	48	37.5
	Total	128	100.0

4.2 Access and Use of e-Governance Platforms

The study explored respondents' awareness, type, frequency and mode of access to NHIF digital services before exploring the transparency implications of the e-Governance platforms. These preliminary findings are important to put the analysis of transparency into perspective because the importance of using platforms to improve institutional transparency depends on how they are used by the people who use them for services.

On awareness, 73.4 per cent of the respondents were aware of the digital services offered by NHIF, and 26.6 per cent were not. Although it is a higher rate than the national average of 39 per cent as reported by the NBS in 2022, the level of awareness is still high, indicating there are significant gaps in information that will impact citizens' ability to hold public institutions accountable using digital tools. A total of 62.5% of the e-Governance services used were online membership verification, and 42.2% was the NHIF mobile application, both of which were key services provided in the hospital context.

In terms of frequency, 32.0 per cent of respondents accessed digital services each month, followed by 26.6 per cent who used them weekly, and 16.4 per cent who used them daily. There were only 6.2 percent who used e-Governance services "NEVER". 64.8 percent of respondents reported using a smartphone to access the digital government service in line with the trend of smart driven e-Governance adoption in Sub-Saharan Africa. The use patterns are relevant to the degree to which digital platforms can be expected to be effective in creating transparency, as the more frequently platforms are used the more likely they are to have accountability-enhancing effects.

4.3 Extent to Which e-Governance Platforms Enhance Transparency

This study aimed to find out how effective e-Governance platforms were in providing transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania. Three statements on a Likert scale asking respondents about their perception of digital platforms in terms of transparency, service quality, and satisfaction with the service were presented. The results are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2*Transparency through e-Governance Platforms (n=128)*

S/N	Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	e-Governance platforms have improved transparency in public sector organisations	4.12	Agree
2	Using e-Governance services satisfies clients' needs	3.94	Agree
3	Quality of services received through e-Governance platforms is better than traditional services	4.08	Agree
	Overall Mean Score	4.05	Agree

Source: Field Data, 2026

Note: Mean score interpretation: 1.00–1.80 = Strongly Disagree; 1.81–2.60 = Disagree; 2.61–3.40 = Neutral; 3.41–4.20 = Agree; 4.21–5.00 = Strongly Agree

Table 2 shows that the respondents were mostly of the opinion that e-Governance platforms have improved transparency in public sector organisations. The overall mean score of 4.05 indicates generally positive perception of the digital government technologies contribution to the openness and accessibility of public services in Benjamini Mkapa Hospital. The statement "e-Governance platforms have improved transparency in public sector organisations" had the highest mean score of 4.12 with high agreement among the respondents that e-governance platforms have proved to be good instruments improving transparency of public sector systems. The discovery points to the fact that the use of e-Governance platforms has helped to bring a certain degree of transparency to the information that is opaque in manual public administration systems, as perceived by service users and officials.

The statement relating to the quality of services received from e-Governance platform gave a mean score of 4.08 which is also interpreted as agree. This finding highlighted that people felt that digital service delivery was better than traditional manual service delivery in terms of reliability, accessibility and efficiency. It was found that the ability of e-Governance systems to speed up service delivery, eliminate paper documents and shorten waiting periods was a key factor in enhancing service quality. Improved service quality, in turn, helps to build citizens' trust in government responsiveness and to reinforce institutional transparency.

The mean score of the statement on use of e-Governance services meets clients' needs was comparatively lower at 3.94, but considered tolerable. This minor difference from the two statements indicates that although the respondents recognized that digital platforms provided transparency benefits, some issues remained and negatively impacted the user's satisfaction. Some of these challenges may be linked to the infrastructure, such as unreliable internet connection and recurrent failure of the systems, as well as lack of technical support, which at times hindered access to services. The slightly lower satisfaction score may also be a reflection of differences in digital literacy of the service users, as some may have found it challenging to navigate online platforms.

4.3.1 Qualitative evidence on e-Governance and Transparency

The key informant interviews yielded results that greatly complemented the quantitative results. The ICT officers and NHIF officers at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital detailed how digital platforms have improved the openness of service delivery in the hospital. One ICT officer said:

"Digital systems have reduced physical paperwork and increased access to service information. Citizens can now verify services and payments online which improves transparency." (Interview with ICT Officer, 5 March 2026)

This testimony reinforces one of the core benefits of e-Governance platforms on enhancing transparency by giving citizens direct access to the information on services, digital platforms help to reduce their reliance on intermediaries and reduce opportunities for filtering and manipulation of information. Providing online verification of membership and payment records helps citizens verify the status of their service entitlements themselves without needing to depend on public officials and further enhances the accountability of the institutions.

An NHIF official further elaborated on the anti-corruption dimension of digital transparency:

"The use of online systems has minimized opportunities for corruption because transactions can be traced electronically." (Interview with NHIF Official, 8 March 2026)

The focus on electronic traceability of transactions brings it in line with the Principal-Agent Theory's assertion that achieving meaningful accountability requires reducing the "information asymmetry" between citizens and public officials. Agents' opportunities to do things for their own interests that are not in the principal's interest are significantly diminished when transactions are electronically recorded. A third respondent, an e-Governance manager, spoke about the operational benefits of digital transformation:

"Before digital systems were introduced, clients were required to move physically between offices to obtain services. Currently many services are processed electronically which has improved efficiency and reduced unnecessary delays." (Interview with e-Governance Manager, 12 March 2026)

Notwithstanding the positive contributions of e-Governance to transparency, key informants also identified persistent challenges that tempered these gains. One key informant, an NHIF officer, observed:

"Transparency has improved, but some systems still experience technical problems and internet interruptions which affect service accessibility especially in remote areas." (Interview with NHIF Officer, 18 March 2026)

This qualification underscores that while e-Governance platforms have made substantive contributions to transparency at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital, infrastructure deficiencies continue to limit the consistency and universality of these gains, particularly for citizens in more remote settings.

4.4 Discussion

The results of this study confirm that e-Governance platforms have immensely improved transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania, having received consistently agreeable mean scores for all the three transparency related statements, and corroborating qualitative evidence from the key informants. These findings support the Principal-Agent Theory's assertion that e-Governance systems lessen the information asymmetry by increasing citizens' access to government information (Andersen, 2009; Bertot et al., 2010). The NHIF digital platforms have made the services, payments, and membership verification processes available electronically, thus reducing the information advantage that previously existed for public officials and making information available in a more conducive way for institutional accountability.

The fact that the digital platforms enhanced transparency aligns with the overall empirical evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. Digital government systems, like Rwanda's Irembo and Kenya's eCitizen platforms, improved transparency of public service delivery through facilitating administrative procedures and generating electronic records that are easily verifiable, according to the World Bank (2021). Also, Tanzania's GePG has been linked to increased transparency in revenue collection, with a reduction in cash transactions (World Bank, 2021), which is aligned with this study's findings in which the reduction of cash based and face-to-face transactions was identified as one of the mechanisms under which e-Governance contributes to greater institutional openness.

The study also validates the link between service quality and transparency suggested by DeLone and McLean (2003) and Petter et al. (2008). The general result that citizens' perception of government responsiveness is improved by e-Governance, in this case by the provision of better quality services than those in the traditional manual form, is borne out by the agreement of respondents on this point. Efficient and predictable delivery of Public Services empowers citizens to assess government performance and hold it accountable, thereby reinforcing the transparency aspect of e-Governance platforms.

It is important to note that the mean score of the client satisfaction statement (3.94) falls below the other two statements, transparency and service quality (both mean 4.03). This is similar to the results of the research conducted by ITU (2023) which cited infrastructure gaps and lack of digital literacy as on-going challenges for e-Governance systems in Sub-Saharan Africa. The slightly lower satisfaction could be attributed to the fact that while the transparency architecture inherent in digital platforms is known, some users still report barriers to accessing these platforms that limit their ability to take full advantage of them. This finding is consistent with the TAM which states that perceived ease of use is one of the key factors that influence whether people adopt a technology or not, and it is one that can affect their satisfaction with the technology (Davis, 1989).

The dominance of a smartphone as the major access device (64.8%) further contextualises the transparency implications of e-Governance in Tanzania. Mobile devices are becoming more accessible and affordable, and mobile internet services have grown, making the mobile-based e-Governance platforms the most convenient way to communicate digitally and in a transparent manner. This is aligned with the global trend in Sub-Saharan Africa, that mobile technology has become the main enabler of digital government adoption and in areas where computer ownership is low, and there is weak fixed internet infrastructure (World Bank, 2021). Overall, the evidence points to the fact that e-Governance platforms at Benjamini Mkapa Hospital have provided substantive and measurable improvement in transparency in public service. In keeping with the transparency goals set forth in the Principal-Agent Theory and in the larger e-governance literature, digital systems have resulted in fewer layers of bureaucratic opacity, greater traceability of transactions and more information about the services available to citizens. But the study also found that transparency benefits vary depending on the quality of supporting infrastructure, the users' digital skills and the commitment of the institutions to ensure and support the development of digital systems.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study measured how far e-Governance can ensure transparency in public sector organisations in Tanzania, based on empirical evidence from Benjamini Mkapa Hospital in Dodoma. The results show that the e-Governance platforms have played a very significant role in enhancing the transparency of the institution. Digital systems, especially

the NHIF online membership verification platform, electronic claims processing, and electronic payment systems, improved citizens' access to information about services, decreased the bureaucratic opacity, and had electronic audit trails which limited opportunities for corruption and for manipulation of information.

The study showed that there was a general consensus among the respondents that the e-Governance platforms contributed to transparency, raised the standard of the services delivered above that of manual services and generally met the services needs of the respondents with an overall mean score of 4.05. These were corroborated by qualitative evidence collected from key informants, which highlighted the importance of digital systems in minimizing physical contact between citizens and public entities, and increasing traceability and availability of information regarding the services. The results align with the Principal-Agent Theory which highlights the ability of digital platforms to improve the transparency of information flow between citizens and government agents, thereby reducing information asymmetry.

Despite these successes, the study found that there was a lack of digital literacy coupled with ongoing infrastructure challenges (such as unstable internet connectivity, limited ICT equipment, and unreliable electricity supply) that constrained the extent to which transparency was achieved. It is concluded that e-Governance platforms can be considered good tools for promoting transparency in the public sector in Tanzania, but the extent to which this can occur will depend on continued investment in the digital infrastructure, digital literacy programmes and institutional capacity development.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are advanced based on the results of the study. Tanzania Government should make investments in ICT infrastructure to all public institutions, especially in rural and peri-urban areas to ensure reliable internet connectivity, stable electricity supply and adequate ICT equipment to enable consistent delivery of e-Governance services. These investments are essential for achieving equitable access to transparency-enhancing digital platforms. Second, public institutions should develop and maintain strong and effective programmes for the development of digital literacy for public sector staff and citizens. To build capacity of employees handling e-Governance systems, it is essential that they be provided with continuous training in ICT. Awareness creation activities should target the service users, especially communities that do not have significant digital exposure, to enable citizens to meaningfully hold their service providers accountable and engage with e-Governance tools rationally.

Third, the design of the e-Government platforms must place mobile optimisation as a priority as smartphones are the main means of accessing digital government services. Mobile-first designs, which make it compatible, easy to use and require very little data will further enable access to transparency-enhancing digital services, expanding citizen engagement. Last but not least, public institutions should have systematic processes to gather user feedback on e-Governance platforms, to continuously improve system design, service delivery and transparency functions.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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