

Effects Of Digital Policies on Public Service Delivery in The Selected Ugandan Districts (Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba, and Budaka districts).

Nabutsebi Fazira¹, Mahmoud Umar², Hindatu M. Yerima³

¹Ph.D. Candidate, Department of public administration, Saa'du Zungur University Gadau - Nigeria

²Department of public administration, Gombe State University Nigeria

³Department of public administration, Saa'du Zungur University Gadau-Nigeria.

Abstract

The study examined the effects of digital policies on public service delivery in selected Ugandan districts, namely Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba and Budaka. The study was motivated by persistent challenges in local government service delivery, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, limited accessibility to services and weak accountability despite ongoing digital transformation initiatives in Uganda. Specifically, the study sought to examine the effect of digital policy effectiveness and digital inclusiveness policy on public service delivery. The study was guided by the E-Government Theory which explains how the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enhances efficiency, transparency, accountability and citizen participation in governance processes. A quantitative research design was adopted and primary data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to public officials and service users within the selected districts. Out of 313 distributed questionnaires, 242 were successfully returned, representing a satisfactory response rate. Data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and SmartPLS for Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis involved measurement model assessment through reliability and validity tests, as well as structural model analysis using coefficient of determination and effect size analysis. The findings revealed that all study constructs achieved satisfactory reliability and validity thresholds. The results further indicated that digital policy effectiveness had a strong positive influence on public service delivery, with a very large effect size ($f^2 = 0.975$), while digital inclusiveness policy had a relatively smaller effect size ($f^2 = 0.025$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.581$) showed that digital policy effectiveness and digital inclusiveness policy jointly explained 58.1% of the variance in public service delivery. The study established that effective implementation of digital policies significantly improves service efficiency, accessibility, transparency, accountability and responsiveness in local governments. The study concluded that digital policies play a significant role in enhancing public service delivery within Ugandan local governments, particularly when effectively implemented and supported by adequate institutional capacity and digital infrastructure. The study recommends that local governments strengthen implementation and monitoring of digital policies, invest in ICT infrastructure, enhance digital literacy among public officials, promote citizen participation in

digital platforms and allocate adequate resources toward digital transformation initiatives to improve public service delivery outcomes.

Key words: digital policies, Digital Inclusiveness Policy, Digital Policy Effectiveness, public service delivery, Ugandan districts.

1. Introduction

Globally, governments are increasingly adopting digital policies to transform public service delivery systems. Digital policy refers to a set of regulatory frameworks, strategies and guidelines that govern the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in public administration (OECD, 2020). These policies aim to improve efficiency, transparency, accountability and citizen participation in governance processes. In developing countries, digital transformation has become a key strategy for overcoming traditional bureaucratic inefficiencies and improving service delivery outcomes. According to the World Bank (2021), digital technologies have the potential to enhance government performance by reducing transaction costs, improving service accessibility and strengthening institutional accountability.

In Uganda, digital transformation is guided by national frameworks such as the Digital Transformation Roadmap (2023/24-2027/28) and the National ICT Policy, which aim to promote e-government services and improve public sector efficiency (Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, 2023). These frameworks emphasize the use of digital platforms to enhance citizen-centered service delivery.

Mbale District Local Government, as part of Uganda's decentralized governance system, plays a vital role in delivering essential public services including education, healthcare, water supply and administrative services. However, traditional service delivery systems in local governments have been characterized by inefficiencies, delays, corruption and limited accessibility (Basheka & Sebola, 2017). The integration of digital policy into local government operations is expected to address these challenges by enabling e-governance systems, improving communication channels, and supporting data-driven decision-making. This study therefore examines the relationship between digital policy and public service delivery in Mbale District Local Government.

2. Problem Statement

Despite ongoing efforts to digitize public services in Uganda, local governments continue to experience significant challenges in service delivery. These challenges include bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, limited access to services and weak accountability mechanisms (Basheka, 2018). Studies indicate that public service delivery in Uganda has historically been "poor, inefficient and ineffective," characterized by high administrative costs and limited transparency (Kyambogo University Research Repository, 2018). Similarly, research on decentralized governance shows that although decentralization has improved service delivery in districts such as Mbale, significant gaps remain in meeting citizens' expectations (Wakwale, 2021). While digital policies have been introduced to address these challenges, their implementation at the local government level remains inconsistent and constrained by infrastructural and institutional limitations. According to the United Nations (2022), many developing countries face challenges in translating digital policy frameworks into tangible service delivery outcomes due to weak

institutional capacity and limited digital infrastructure. The persistence of these challenges raises concerns about the effectiveness of digital policy in improving public service delivery at the district level. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between digital policy and public service delivery in Mbale District Local Government.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of digital policy effectiveness on public service delivery in the selected Ugandan districts (Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba, and Budaka districts).
2. To evaluate the effect of digital policy inclusiveness on public service delivery in the selected Ugandan districts (Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba, and Budaka districts).

4. Literature Review

4.1 Concept of Digital Policy

Digital policy refers to a comprehensive framework that guides the adoption, implementation, and regulation of ICT in governance. It encompasses areas such as e-government, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and data governance (OECD, 2020). Digital policies are essential for ensuring that technology adoption in the public sector aligns with national development goals. In Uganda, the National ICT Policy emphasizes the use of ICT to improve service delivery, enhance communication between government and citizens, and promote transparency (Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, 2023). According to Heeks (2006), digital policy plays a critical role in bridging the gap between technology and governance by providing a structured approach to ICT integration in public administration.

4.2 Public Service Delivery

Public service delivery refers to the provision of essential services by government institutions to meet the needs of citizens, including healthcare, education, water supply, infrastructure, and administrative services (World Bank, 2021). Effective service delivery is characterized by accessibility, efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, which collectively ensure that services are delivered in a timely, equitable, and citizen-centered manner. Accessibility ensures that all citizens, regardless of location or socio-economic status, can obtain services; efficiency emphasizes optimal use of resources to achieve maximum output; transparency and accountability promote openness and answerability in government operations; while responsiveness reflects the ability of institutions to address citizens' needs promptly. In developing countries, improving public service delivery remains a critical priority due to persistent challenges such as limited financial and human resources, weak institutional frameworks, and governance inefficiencies, which often hinder the effective provision of services (Grindle, 2017).

4.3 Digital Policy

Digital policy refers to a framework of rules, regulations, strategies and guidelines that govern the adoption and utilization of digital technologies within organizations and public institutions. It encompasses areas

such as e-government, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data governance, internet accessibility and digital communication systems. Digital policy is designed to guide governments and institutions in leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve governance, service delivery, efficiency, transparency and citizen participation (OECD, 2020). Recent studies indicate that digital policy has become a central component of public sector reforms because governments increasingly rely on digital systems to modernize administrative processes and enhance service accessibility. According to Heeks (2006), digital policy provides the institutional and regulatory foundation for integrating ICT into governance systems and public administration. The policy ensures that digital transformation aligns with national development priorities and public sector objectives. In developing countries, digital policies are increasingly viewed as strategic tools for reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, enhancing accountability and improving citizen-centered governance. Research by Haug, Dan, and Mergel (2024) revealed that digitally induced reforms improve coordination, organizational flexibility and responsiveness within public institutions.

In Uganda, digital policy implementation is guided by frameworks such as the National ICT Policy and the Digital Transformation Roadmap 2023/24-2027/28, which seek to strengthen e-government systems and improve public service delivery. The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance emphasizes the importance of ICT integration in promoting transparency, efficiency and communication between citizens and government institutions. Studies on digital transformation in Africa indicate that governments are increasingly adopting digital technologies to improve governance and service accessibility, although infrastructural limitations and institutional challenges continue to hinder implementation (Baloyi et al., 2025). Furthermore, digital policy contributes to public value creation by supporting information sharing, coordination and collaboration among government agencies. A recent study by Kim and Lee (2024) established that effective digital policy frameworks promote value-driven digital transformation through technological innovation, citizen engagement and institutional efficiency. Therefore, digital policy remains an important instrument for improving governance systems and strengthening public service delivery in local governments.

4.3.1 Digital Policy Effectiveness

Digital policy effectiveness refers to the extent to which digital policies achieve their intended objectives in improving governance processes, administrative efficiency, transparency, accountability, and public service delivery. Effective digital policies are characterized by successful implementation, operational efficiency, adequate institutional support, accessibility of digital systems and responsiveness to citizens' needs. According to the United Nations E-Government Survey (2022), digital policy effectiveness is reflected in the ability of governments to use ICT systems to deliver timely, transparent and citizen-centered services. Recent empirical studies show that effective implementation of digital policies significantly improves public administration performance. A systematic review by Hussain and Suryaningrum (2025) established that e-government implementation enhances efficiency, transparency and citizen satisfaction in public service delivery by reducing administrative bottlenecks and improving communication between government and citizens. Similarly, Villalobos and Linarez (2023) found that effective e-government systems improve the quality of public services through automation, improved coordination and reduction of bureaucratic delays.

Research on public sector digital transformation further indicates that the effectiveness of digital policies depends on factors such as institutional capacity, technological readiness, staff competence, leadership support and availability of ICT infrastructure. Escobar, Almeida, and Varajão (2023) identified organizational readiness, stakeholder support and digital competence as major determinants of successful digital transformation in the public sector. Likewise, Latupeirissa et al. (2024) noted that effective digital transformation improves government accountability, citizen participation and operational efficiency, although challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, resource constraints and resistance to change continue to affect implementation.

In the Ugandan context, digital policy effectiveness remains constrained by limited ICT infrastructure, inadequate funding, weak institutional coordination and low digital literacy levels among public officials and citizens. However, studies indicate that where digital systems are effectively implemented, local governments experience improvements in administrative coordination, service accessibility and accountability mechanisms. Nguar (2025) found that digital technology significantly enhances public management reforms in Ugandan local governments when supported by institutional competence and inclusive implementation strategies. Thus, digital policy effectiveness is critical in determining the success of e-government initiatives and the general quality of public service delivery.

4.3.2 Digital Inclusiveness

Digital inclusiveness policy refers to strategies and measures aimed at ensuring equal access to digital technologies, ICT infrastructure and online public services for all citizens regardless of geographic location, income level, gender, age or educational background. Digital inclusiveness seeks to minimize the digital divide and ensure that marginalized and vulnerable populations are not excluded from the benefits of digital transformation. According to the World Bank (2021), digital inclusion is essential for promoting equitable access to public services and enhancing citizen participation in governance processes. Digital inclusiveness policies focus on improving internet accessibility, affordability of digital technologies, digital literacy, accessibility for persons with disabilities and equitable participation in digital governance systems. Recent literature emphasizes that inclusive digital systems are fundamental for achieving sustainable and citizen-centered e-government initiatives. Latupeirissa et al. (2024) argued that although digital transformation improves public service delivery, inadequate inclusiveness may marginalize populations lacking access to digital platforms and technological skills. Similarly, research on digital governance in Africa indicates that digital exclusion remains a major challenge due to disparities in infrastructure, literacy levels, income distribution and rural connectivity. Baloyi et al. (2025) observed that while digital technologies improve transparency and service delivery, many African countries continue to experience barriers related to internet accessibility, digital literacy and unequal access to ICT resources. The United Nations (2022) also emphasizes that inclusive digital policies are necessary to ensure that all citizens benefit equally from e-government systems and public digital services.

In Uganda, digital inclusiveness remains a significant concern, particularly in rural districts where internet penetration, electricity coverage and ICT infrastructure remain limited. Vulnerable groups such as low-income households, elderly populations and rural communities often face difficulties accessing digital public services. A policy analysis by Ssebubbu et al. (2026) found that fragmented digital systems and

unequal access to ICT infrastructure limit equitable participation in Uganda's digital governance initiatives.

4.3.3 Digital Policy and Public Service Delivery

Digital policy plays a transformative role in improving public service delivery by enabling the adoption of e-government systems. E-government refers to the use of ICT to deliver government services, exchange information, and facilitate communication between government and citizens (UN E-Government Survey, 2022). Digital platforms reduce bureaucratic delays, minimize corruption, and improve efficiency by automating processes and reducing human intervention (Heeks, 2006). For example, online service delivery systems enable citizens to access services without physically visiting government offices, thereby reducing time and costs.

Digital communication tools such as websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms enhance transparency and accountability by enabling real-time interaction between citizens and government officials (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2012). Furthermore, digital policy supports data-driven decision-making by enabling the collection, storage, and analysis of data for improved planning and service delivery.

Empirical studies indicate a positive relationship between ICT adoption and public service delivery. For instance, Basheka (2018) found that the integration of ICT in Uganda's public sector significantly improved operational efficiency and reduced delays in service provision. Similarly, the World Bank (2021) reports that digital technologies enhance service delivery by expanding access to services, reducing opportunities for corruption, and strengthening government accountability. Despite these benefits, several studies highlight persistent challenges that limit the effectiveness of digital policy implementation. These include inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited digital literacy among public servants, resistance to technological change, and weak institutional capacity (Heeks, 2006; United Nations, 2022). Such challenges are particularly evident in local governments like Mbale District, where resource constraints and infrastructural limitations continue to hinder the full realization of digital policy benefits in public service delivery.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the E-Government Theory, which posits that the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into government operations enhances public service delivery by improving efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation (Heeks, 2006). The theory explains how digital transformation enables governments to move from traditional bureaucratic systems to more streamlined, responsive, and citizen-centered service delivery models. By leveraging ICT, public institutions can reduce administrative bottlenecks, improve coordination, and deliver services more effectively to citizens.

The theory further emphasizes that digital technologies transform governance by reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, enhancing the flow of information, improving accountability mechanisms, and promoting

citizen engagement. For example, digital platforms facilitate faster processing of services, minimize manual procedures, and enable real-time communication between government and citizens. Additionally, the use of ICT enhances transparency by making information more accessible and traceable, thereby strengthening accountability and reducing opportunities for corruption (Heeks, 2006; United Nations, 2022). The relevance of the E-Government Theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how digital policy influences public service delivery outcomes through ICT adoption in public institutions. It provides a useful framework for understanding how the implementation of digital policies in Mbale District Local Government can improve efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness of services while fostering greater citizen participation and trust in government processes.

6. Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between digital policy and public service delivery in Mbale District Local Government. Unlike a purely qualitative approach, this design allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data to establish measurable relationships between variables. Primary data was collected from 313 respondents using structured questionnaires administered to public officials and service users within the district and 242 completed questionnaire were returned. The quantitative approach was appropriate because it enabled statistical testing of hypotheses which can provide objectivity and generalization of the findings regarding the influence of digital policy on service delivery outcomes (Creswell, 2014).

Data collection focuses on key constructs such as digital infrastructure, e-governance systems, digital communication, transparency, and service delivery effectiveness. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale to capture perceptions and experiences of respondents. The collected data is coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for cleaning and preliminary analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, are used to summarize respondent characteristics and provide an overview of the variables under study. This helps in identifying patterns and trends in digital policy implementation and service delivery performance.

For inferential analysis, the study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique is used to examine the relationships between latent variables and to test the study hypotheses. SmartPLS is particularly suitable because it handles complex models, works effectively with smaller sample sizes, and does not require strict assumptions about data normality (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis involves two stages: the measurement model assessment (validity and reliability tests such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted) and the structural model assessment (path coefficients, significance levels, and coefficient of determination).

This methodological approach provides a robust framework for analyzing the influence of digital policy on public service delivery. By combining descriptive analysis in SPSS and regression analysis through SmartPLS, the study generates empirical evidence on how digital infrastructure, e-governance, and

communication tools affect efficiency, transparency, and accountability in service delivery within Mbale District Local Government.

7. Findings and Discussion

Table7.1 : Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

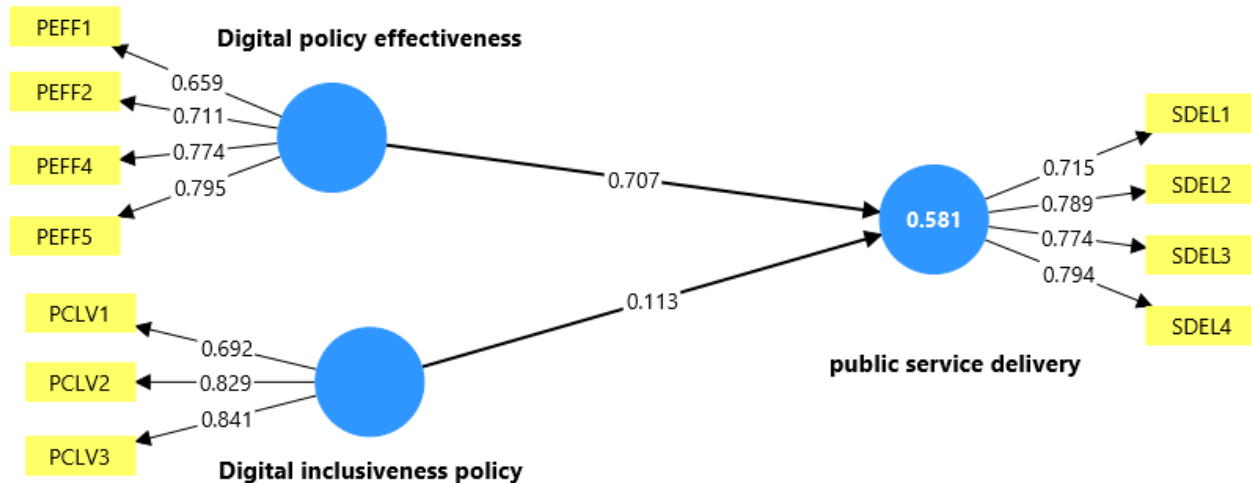
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	135	55.8
	Female	107	44.2
Age Bracket	20-29 years	36	14.9
	30-39 years	95	39.3
	40-49 years	79	32.6
	50 years & above	32	13.2
Years in District Local Government	0-1 year	21	8.7
	2-5 years	60	24.8
	6-10 years	74	30.6
	11-20 years	87	36.0
Highest Qualification	Postgraduate	52	21.5
	Professional Certificate	3	1.2
	Bachelor's Degree	113	46.7
	Diploma	56	23.1
	Certificate	9	3.7
	A-Level	3	1.2
	O-Level	3	1.2
	Others	3	1.2

The descriptive findings indicate that the majority of respondents were male (55.8%), while females constituted 44.2%, suggesting relatively balanced gender representation in the study. Such gender distribution is important in public administration research because inclusive representation improves the validity and generalizability of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In terms of age distribution, most respondents were within the 30-39 years (39.3%) and 40-49 years (32.6%) brackets, implying that the study largely captured views from individuals in their most productive and professionally active years. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), respondents within these age categories are more likely to provide reliable and informed responses due to their active engagement in organizational processes.

Regarding work experience, a significant proportion of respondents had served in the district local government for 11-20 years (36.0%), followed by those with 6-10 years (30.6%), indicating that the majority possessed substantial institutional knowledge and practical experience. Experienced employees are considered key informants in organizational studies because they have deeper insights into policy implementation and service delivery systems (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). In terms of education level, most respondents held a Bachelor's degree (46.7%), followed by Diploma holders (23.1%) and Postgraduate qualifications (21.5%), demonstrating that the respondents were generally well-educated and capable of

understanding and evaluating digital policy frameworks. Higher levels of education enhance respondents' ability to interpret and respond accurately to research instruments, thereby improving data quality (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In nutshell, demographic profile suggests that the data was obtained from a knowledgeable, experienced, and fairly representative sample, making it suitable for analyzing the relationship between digital policy and public service delivery in Mbale District Local Government.

Figure 1: showing factor loading



Digital policy

Digital policy effectiveness

Digital inclusiveness policy

Table 7.2: Construct Validity and Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Digital Inclusiveness Policy	0.708	0.755	0.832	0.624
Digital Policy Effectiveness	0.722	0.737	0.825	0.543
Public Service Delivery (SDEL)	0.769	0.770	0.852	0.591

Table 7.2 presents the reliability and convergent validity results of the study constructs. The findings revealed that all Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.708 to 0.769, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency among the measurement items (Hair et al., 2022). This implies that the indicators used to measure digital inclusiveness policy, digital policy

effectiveness, and public service delivery consistently reflected their respective constructs within the selected Ugandan districts of Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba, and Budaka.

The composite reliability values (ρ_c) ranged from 0.825 to 0.852, which further confirmed strong construct reliability. According to Sarstedt et al. (2021), composite reliability values above 0.70 indicate that the latent constructs are adequately measured by their indicators. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.543 to 0.624, all above the acceptable threshold of 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. This means that the constructs explained more than 50% of the variance in their indicators. These findings support the assumptions of the E-Government Theory, which argues that effective integration of ICT systems in government institutions enhances organizational efficiency, transparency and service delivery outcomes (Heeks, 2006). The reliability of the constructs suggests that digital policy dimensions are relevant and measurable determinants of public service delivery within local governments. The findings are consistent with Basheka (2018), who found that ICT integration improves administrative effectiveness and institutional performance in Uganda's public sector.

Table 7.3: Discriminant Validity -Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct Relationships	HTMT Value
Digital Policy Effectiveness ↔ Digital Inclusiveness Policy	0.580
Public Service Delivery ↔ Digital Inclusiveness Policy	0.538
Public Service Delivery ↔ Digital Policy Effectiveness	0.990

Table 7.3 presents the discriminant validity results using the HTMT criterion. The HTMT values between digital policy effectiveness and digital inclusiveness policy (0.580) and between public service delivery and digital inclusiveness policy (0.538) were below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2021). This means that the constructs measured distinct concepts within the study model. However, the HTMT value between public service delivery and digital policy effectiveness was 0.990, exceeding the recommended threshold. This suggests a very strong conceptual relationship between the two constructs. In the context of the selected Ugandan districts, respondents appeared to strongly associate effective implementation of digital policies with improvements in service delivery outcomes such as efficiency, accessibility, responsiveness and transparency.

The findings align with the E-Government Theory, which posits that effective digital governance systems directly enhance public service delivery by reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and improving coordination between government institutions and citizens (Heeks, 2006). The strong relationship also supports findings by the World Bank (2021) which reported that effective digital governance significantly improves accountability and accessibility of public services in developing countries.

Table 7.4: Factor Loadings

Construct	Item Code	Factor Loading
Digital Inclusiveness Policy	PCLV1	0.692
	PCLV2	0.829
	PCLV3	0.841
Digital Policy Effectiveness	PEFF1	0.659
	PEFF2	0.711
	PEFF4	0.774
	PEFF5	0.795
Public Service Delivery	SDEL1	0.715
	SDEL2	0.789
	SDEL3	0.774
	SDEL4	0.794

Table 7.4 presents the factor loadings for indicators measuring digital inclusiveness policy, digital policy effectiveness and public service delivery. All indicators loaded above the acceptable threshold of 0.60, indicating adequate indicator reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). The indicators for digital inclusiveness policy recorded loadings ranging from 0.692 to 0.841, suggesting that issues related to accessibility, participation and inclusiveness were important aspects of digital governance within the selected districts. This implies that citizens and public officials recognized the importance of inclusive digital systems in facilitating equitable access to public services.

Digital policy effectiveness indicators loaded between 0.659 and 0.795, demonstrating that policy implementation effectiveness, responsiveness and coordination significantly contributed to digital governance outcomes. Public service delivery indicators also recorded strong loadings ranging from 0.715 to 0.794, indicating that respondents associated digital transformation with improved efficiency, timeliness and quality of public services. The findings support the E-Government Theory which emphasizes that ICT adoption enhances efficiency and responsiveness in public institutions by automating administrative processes and improving communication channels (Heeks, 2006). The findings are also consistent with Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes (2012) who argued that digital technologies improve transparency and citizen engagement in public administration.

Table 7.5: Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Dependent Variable	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Public Service Delivery	0.581	0.578

Table 7.5 presents the coefficient of determination (R²) results for the structural model. The findings indicate that digital inclusiveness policy and digital policy effectiveness jointly explained 58.1% of the variance in public service delivery within the selected Ugandan districts. According to Hair et al. (2022), an R² value above 0.50 indicates moderate to substantial explanatory power in social science research.

This implies that digital policies significantly influence public service delivery outcomes in Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba, and Budaka districts.

The findings suggest that improvements in digital governance systems enhance service accessibility, efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness within local governments. This supports the E-Government Theory, which explains that ICT integration enables governments to move from traditional bureaucratic systems toward more efficient and citizen-centered service delivery models (Heeks, 2006). The findings are also consistent with Basheka (2018), who found that ICT adoption in Uganda's public sector improved operational efficiency and reduced delays in service provision.

Table 7.6: Effect Size (f^2)

Variable	Digital Inclusiveness Policy	Digital Policy Effectiveness	Public Service Delivery
Digital Inclusiveness Policy			0.025
Digital Policy Effectiveness			0.975
Public Service Delivery			

Table 7.6 presents the effect size (f^2) results showing the contribution of each predictor variable to public service delivery. Digital inclusiveness policy recorded a small effect size of 0.025, implying that although inclusiveness contributes to public service delivery, its direct influence was relatively limited. This may indicate that access to digital systems alone is insufficient to significantly improve service delivery unless accompanied by effective policy implementation, institutional support and technological infrastructure. In many Ugandan local governments, infrastructural limitations, inadequate ICT equipment and low digital literacy levels may reduce the effectiveness of inclusiveness initiatives.

In contrast, digital policy effectiveness recorded a very large effect size of 0.975, indicating that effective implementation and operationalization of digital policies had a substantial influence on public service delivery. This suggests that well-coordinated digital systems significantly improve efficiency, transparency, accountability and responsiveness in local government operations.

The findings strongly support the E-Government Theory, which emphasizes that effective ICT implementation enhances institutional performance and citizen satisfaction through improved administrative efficiency and service coordination (Heeks, 2006). The results are consistent with the United Nations E-Government Survey (2022) which reported that successful digital governance depends more on implementation effectiveness than on policy existence alone.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that digital policies significantly influence public service delivery in the selected Ugandan districts of Mbale, Iganga, Namutumba and Budaka. The findings revealed that digital policy effectiveness had a substantial positive effect on public service delivery, while digital inclusiveness policy

had a relatively smaller effect. The study further concludes that effective implementation of digital policies improves efficiency, accessibility, transparency, responsiveness and accountability within local governments. The findings support the E-Government Theory, which argues that ICT integration transforms traditional bureaucratic systems into more efficient and citizen-centered governance structures. However, the study also concludes that digital inclusiveness alone is insufficient to achieve substantial improvements in service delivery without adequate institutional capacity, infrastructure and effective implementation mechanisms.

9. Recommendations

Local governments should strengthen the implementation, supervision and monitoring of digital policies in order to enhance efficiency, accountability, transparency and responsiveness in public service delivery. The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance should further invest in digital infrastructure such as reliable internet connectivity, ICT equipment and integrated e-governance systems to support effective digital transformation within local governments. In addition, district local governments should enhance digital literacy and provide continuous ICT training for public officials to improve their ability to effectively utilize digital systems in service delivery processes. Government institutions should also promote citizen awareness and participation in digital platforms to enhance accessibility, inclusiveness and citizen engagement in governance processes. Furthermore, policymakers should strengthen institutional support mechanisms and allocate adequate financial resources toward digital transformation initiatives to ensure sustainable implementation of digital policies and improved public service delivery outcomes in Ugandan local governments.

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