



Digitalization of Public Service Delivery and Citizen Access to Government Services in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects

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Submission Date: 21 July 2026 **Published Date:** 10 Sept. 2026

Citation: Kamar, B. B., Musa, A., & Garba, F. (2026). Digitalization of Public Service Delivery and Citizen Access to Government Services in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects. In INSR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (Vol. 2, Number 9, pp. 14–22). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22693337>

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between digitalization of public service delivery and citizen access to government services in Nigeria. Specifically, it focuses on three critical dimensions of digitalization: e-government platforms, digital literacy and digital infrastructure, and interoperability and integration of government digital platforms. The paper examines how these dimensions shape citizens' ability to access and utilize government services. Drawing on secondary data from relevant academic literature, official reports from the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), Galaxy Backbone, the United Nations, and the World Bank, the paper finds that digitalization has contributed to expanding access to government services, but significant challenges remain. These challenges include inadequate digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy, fragmented government platforms, unequal access to digital technologies, and institutional capacity constraints. The paper further observes that digitalization alone does not guarantee equitable citizen access to government services. Rather, its effectiveness depends on complementary investments in broadband infrastructure, digital skills, interoperable platforms, institutional capacity, and mechanisms for citizen engagement and feedback. The paper concludes that digitalization represents a necessary but insufficient condition for improving citizen access to government services in Nigeria. It recommends accelerated broadband deployment, strengthened digital literacy programmes, improved interoperability among government platforms, enhanced institutional capacity, and more effective citizen feedback mechanisms to promote inclusive and accessible digital public service delivery.

Keywords: Digitalization, Public Service Delivery, Citizen Access, E-Government, and Digital Divide.

1.1 Introduction

The digital transformation of public service delivery has emerged as one of the most significant governance reforms of the twenty-first century, with governments across the globe leveraging digital technologies to enhance efficiency, transparency, and citizen access to government services (OECD, 2016). In Nigeria, the imperative for digitalizing public service delivery has become increasingly urgent as the country grapples with persistent challenges of bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and limited citizen access to essential government services (Nwagwu & Akinbode, 2015). The Federal Government has pursued an ambitious digitalization agenda, introducing integrated digital platforms designed to bring services closer to citizens, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and enhance transparency and accountability in public administration (Federal Ministry of Communications, 2025).

Digitalization of public service delivery, in the context of this paper, refers to the systematic application of digital technologies to automate, integrate, and monitor government service delivery functions, encompassing the deployment of e-government platforms, digital identity systems, and interoperable data exchange frameworks (Heeks, 2002). This includes the Government Service Portal (GSP), a unified digital platform launched in October 2024 through a collaboration between Galaxy Backbone and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), designed to streamline Government-to-Citizen (G2C) interactions and provide citizens with seamless, secure access to critical services including NIN Registration, Immigration Services, healthcare, and more (ITEdgeNews, 2024; Daily Trust, 2024).

Citizen access to government services, the dependent variable in this paper, refers to the ability of citizens to obtain, utilize, and benefit from government services in a timely, convenient, and equitable manner. This encompasses service utilization rates, reduction in service bottlenecks, and service equity and inclusivity across demographic groups, geographic regions, and socio-economic categories. When digitalization is effectively implemented, citizens should experience improved access to services, reduced time and cost of service delivery, and enhanced satisfaction with government performance (Ishola et al., 2025).

Despite significant policy initiatives and technological investments, Nigeria continues to face substantial challenges in achieving meaningful digital transformation of public service delivery. According to the latest e-government statistics, Nigeria has one of the lowest e-government user numbers and adoption rates, with an index of 0.4525, ranking 140th out of 193 nations (PLOS ONE, 2025). The National Broadband Plan (NBP) 2020-2025 aimed for 70 percent broadband penetration by the end of 2025; however, as of July 2025, penetration stood at just 48.01 percent, a significant shortfall (Guardian, 2025). The Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani, has confirmed that no fewer than 20 million Nigerians still lack access to internet services, with the unconnected population predominantly in rural communities (AllAfrica, 2025). These infrastructure deficits, combined with low digital literacy rates, weak institutional capacity, and limited citizen trust in government digital platforms, continue to constrain citizen access to digital government services (The Sun, 2025).

This paper focuses on three critical dimensions of digitalization that influence citizen access to government services in Nigeria. First, e-government platform penetration, encompassing the availability and usage of online service portals, mobile applications, and digital platforms for government service delivery. The Government Service Portal (GSP) and State-level initiatives such as Anambra State's AI-powered SmartGov platform, which provides access to more than 31 government services through a single digital gateway, represent significant advances in platform penetration (Punch, 2025; Voice of Nigeria, 2025). Second, digital literacy and infrastructure, encompassing the level of digital skills among citizens and the availability of digital infrastructure including broadband connectivity, reliable electricity, and affordable data. The significant digital divide between urban and rural areas, with vast rural regions in States such as Kebbi, Taraba, Niger, and Cross River still struggling with weak or non-existent connectivity, represents a fundamental constraint on citizen access (AllAfrica, 2025). Third, interoperability and integration of government digital platforms, encompassing the extent of integration among government digital platforms and data-sharing capabilities across MDAs. The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has emphasized that digital identity serves as the central nervous system of e-governance, with the National Identification Number (NIN) enabling interoperability across platforms and making it possible for banks, telecoms, and government agencies to deliver more secure and inclusive services (Businessday, 2025).

The selection of these three dimensions of digitalization by the paper enables comprehensive analysis across different mechanisms through which digitalization affects citizen access to government services, from platform availability to infrastructure readiness to system integration. This scope is reflected throughout the analysis, with each dimension examined in relation to the specific challenges and opportunities evident in available data.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section synthesizes relevant concepts on the study variables in a bid to achieve the objectives of the paper.

2.1.1 Concept of Digitalization of Public Service Delivery

Digitalization of public service delivery refers to the systematic application of information and communication technologies to government service delivery functions, encompassing the automation, integration, and monitoring of government services to enhance efficiency, transparency and citizen access (Heeks, 2002). This concept extends beyond mere computerization to include the fundamental reorganization of service delivery processes around digital platforms, reducing reliance on paper-based documentation, physical office visits, and manual processing (Andrews, 2013).

In the Nigerian context, digitalization of public service delivery has been pursued through multiple interconnected initiatives. The Government Service Portal (GSP), launched in October 2024, represents a unified digital platform designed to enhance the delivery of public services by providing a seamless, secure, and accessible portal where citizens can interact with multiple government agencies (ITEdgeNews, 2024). Through this portal, citizens can access critical services such as NIN Registration, Immigration Services, healthcare services, and more with little or no need to visit physical offices. The GSP is designed as a unified digital platform that streamlines access to public services, enabling citizens to interact seamlessly with multiple government agencies without the need for in-person visits (Punch, 2024).

The National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2025 represents a landmark legislative initiative aimed at establishing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for Nigeria's digital transformation (Federal Ministry of Communications, 2025). The bill, which is the first-of-its-kind on the continent, seeks to promote the adoption of digital technologies across all sectors of the economy by strengthening legal recognition for electronic communications, records, and contracts; mandating digital transformation across public institutions; and ensuring ethical, transparent, and risk-based governance of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Federal Ministry of Communications, 2025). The bill effectively codifies NITDA as the central implementing authority for Nigeria's digital economy and e-governance framework.

State-level initiatives have also emerged as important components of Nigeria's digitalization agenda. Anambra State launched SmartGov, an artificial intelligence-driven platform designed to enhance citizen engagement and simplify access to public services (Voice of Nigeria, 2025). The platform, accessible at smart.anambrastate.gov.ng, serves as a single digital gateway through which residents can access more than 31 government services anytime and from anywhere (Punch, 2025). Powered by artificial intelligence, SmartGov enables citizens to interact with government through natural conversations rather than complex paperwork or bureaucratic procedures. At the heart of the platform is NORA, an intelligent digital assistant trained on Anambra State government services, processes, and directories, which guides users to the correct service, requirements, or procedures, ensuring fast, accurate, and consistent interactions across government agencies (Voice of Nigeria, 2025).

2.1.2 Concept of Citizen Access to Government Services

Citizen access to government services refers to the ability of citizens to obtain, utilize, and benefit from government services in a timely, convenient, and equitable manner. This concept encompasses multiple dimensions, including the availability of services, the ease with which citizens can navigate service delivery processes, the time and cost associated with accessing services, and the equity of access across different demographic groups, geographic regions, and socio-economic categories (OECD, 2016).

Service utilization rates represent a key indicator of citizen access to government services. This refers to the frequency and volume of citizen usage of government services, including service transaction volumes, enrollment rates, and application submissions (Businessday, 2025). When digitalization is effectively implemented, service utilization rates should increase as citizens find it easier and more convenient to access government services. However, the Citizens' Delivery Tracker (CDT), launched in April 2024 to provide real-time feedback from Nigerians on government performance across key sectors, has faced significant challenges including low awareness and weak responses to citizen complaints (The Cable, 2026). A four-month citizen perception survey revealed a "high-demand, low-utilisation" paradox: while 82 percent of citizens expressed interest in tracking government performance, 64 percent were unaware of the CDT, and 74 percent had never used it.

Reduction in service bottlenecks represents another critical dimension of citizen access. This refers to the time taken to access services, the number of procedural steps required, and the associated costs. Digitalization has the potential to significantly reduce service bottlenecks by automating processes, eliminating redundant steps, and enabling remote service delivery. The Nigeria e-Government Summit 2025 showcased transformative e-government pilot projects that have improved service timelines, reduced costs, and increased satisfaction. The summit emphasized that digital processes have already been proven to be 74 percent faster than in-person equivalents, and digitising government payments could add as much as 4.5 percent to Nigeria's GDP annually (Businessday, 2025).

Service equity and inclusivity represent a third critical dimension of citizen access. This refers to access to services across demographic groups, geographic regions, and socio-economic categories. The digital divide in Nigeria characterized by disparities in internet access, digital literacy, and affordability represents a fundamental challenge to service equity and

inclusivity. As the Minister of Communications has acknowledged, communities without stable internet access cannot participate in or benefit from the digitalization of government services, deepening inequality between connected and unconnected populations (AllAfrica, 2025).

2.1.3 The Relationship between Digitalization and Citizen Access

The relationship between digitalization of public service delivery and citizen access to government services is both direct and conditional. Digitalization directly enhances citizen access by enabling remote service delivery, reducing transaction costs, and streamlining bureaucratic processes (Heeks, 2002). However, the realization of these benefits is conditional on the availability of digital infrastructure, the digital literacy of citizens, the interoperability of government platforms, and the trust of citizens in digital government services (Ishola et al., 2025).

The Digital Public Infrastructure Framework, unveiled by the Federal Government on March 4, 2025, proposes a whole-of-government approach to reforming public service delivery and provides a platform for the private sector to participate in building and delivering services that improve access and citizen well-being. The framework also established the Nigerian Digital Public Infrastructure Centre as the programme office responsible for coordinating education, research, and knowledge management for the development of digital public infrastructure (Punch, 2025). The framework's objectives include enhancing interoperability between platforms, ensuring data security and privacy, improving accessibility for all users including marginalised groups, setting performance benchmarks, promoting innovation through open-source tools, providing governance guidelines, and standardising testing practices.

However, significant challenges remain. The CIAPS' Panorama CGPI e-Governance Report (2025) assessed the digital platforms of 36 States using 10 critical indicators, including website security, content relevance, interactivity, financial transparency, user friendliness, MDAs directory, and online service availability. The report found that while States, such as Lagos, Anambra, and Abia, demonstrated strong digital governance practices, many others lagged dangerously behind. Adamawa ranked zero in digital governance as the State's website remains inaccessible, while Rivers State is also at the bottom of the chart. Katsina and Niger States were singled out for having non-functional or broken contact forms, outdated content, and poor user interface design, effectively cutting off citizens from government information and services (Guardian, 2025).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between digitalization of public service delivery and citizen access to government services in Nigeria. Developed by Fred Davis in 1989, TAM posits that an individual's behavioral intention to use a technology is determined by two primary factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology would enhance their job performance, while perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology would be free of effort (Davis, 1989).

In the context of digital government services, TAM explains why citizens adopt or fail to adopt digital platforms for accessing government services. When citizens perceive that digital government services are useful that they save time, reduce costs, and improve service quality they are more likely to use them. Similarly, when citizens perceive that digital government services are easy to use that they have intuitive interfaces, clear instructions, and minimal technical requirements they are more likely to use them (Ishola et al., 2025). TAM has been extended to include additional factors relevant to the Nigerian context. Research has shown that weak trust in government constrains citizens' adoption of ICT-enabled services in Nigeria despite extensive investment (Ishola et al., 2025). Citizen satisfaction also plays a central role in shaping perceptions of e-governance: when services delivered through digital platforms were timely, reliable, and responsive, citizens tended to view them positively. The Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) has emphasized that privacy is the cornerstone of public trust, with the NDPC CEO stressing that "without privacy, we cannot achieve efficient e-government services".

The Technology Acceptance Model is particularly relevant for analyzing the relationship between digitalization and citizen access in Nigeria because it explains why the mere availability of digital platforms does not guarantee citizen access. The "high-demand, low-utilisation" paradox identified in the Citizens' Delivery Tracker where 82 percent of citizens expressed interest in tracking government performance but 74 percent had never used the platform reflects the gap between perceived usefulness and actual adoption (The Cable, 2026). This gap is explained by factors such as low awareness (64 percent were unaware of the CDT), lack of trust (only about a third of complaints were resolved fully or partially), and perceived difficulty of use (The Cable, 2026).

TAM also illuminates the role of socio-cultural factors in shaping technology adoption. Research has shown that age, gender, and ethnic background all affect the satisfaction and adoption of e-government in Nigeria (Covenant University, 2025). These findings suggest that digitalization strategies must be sensitive to the diverse characteristics of the citizen population and must address the specific barriers faced by different demographic groups.

3.1 Methodology

This paper relied heavily on secondary data derived from academic journals, official reports, policy documents, newspaper articles, and online resources accessed via Google Scholar. Data were collected from academic journal articles addressing digitalization, e-government, and citizen access to government services in Nigeria; official reports from government agencies including the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), and Galaxy Backbone; publications from international organizations including the United Nations E-Government Development Index and the World Bank; and Nigerian newspaper reports covering e-government initiatives, digital infrastructure developments, and citizen access challenges. The gathered data was analyzed thematically to draw comprehensive conclusions, identifying recurring patterns across sources regarding the relationship between digitalization of public service delivery and citizen access to government services, with specific attention to evidence of e-government platform penetration, digital literacy and infrastructure, interoperability and integration, and corresponding citizen access indicators.

4.1 Discussion

In the exploration of the relationship between digitalization of public service delivery and citizen access to government services in Nigeria, this paper uncovers several critical areas that necessitate careful consideration: the state of e-government platform penetration and its impact on service utilization, the persistent digital divide characterized by infrastructure deficits and low digital literacy, the challenges of platform interoperability and integration, and the role of citizen trust and satisfaction in shaping access to digital government services. These challenges present intricate obstacles that Nigeria must address to translate digital investments into meaningful improvements in citizen access.

One of the foremost challenges identified in the exploration relates to e-government platform penetration. According to the latest e-government statistics, Nigeria has one of the lowest e-government user numbers and adoption rates, with an index of 0.4525, ranking 140th out of 193 nations (PLOS ONE, 2025). The United Nations E-Government Development Index shows Nigeria's ranking deteriorating from 140 in 2022 to 144 in 2024, reflecting persistent challenges in digital government development (UN, 2024). This low ranking is reflected in the limited adoption of digital government platforms by citizens. The Citizens' Delivery Tracker (CDT), launched in April 2024 to provide real-time feedback from Nigerians on government performance across key sectors, has faced low awareness and weak responses to citizen complaints (The Cable, 2026). A four-month citizen perception survey revealed that while 82 percent of citizens expressed interest in tracking government performance, 64 percent were unaware of the CDT, and 74 percent had never used it. Among users, 54 percent found the platform useful, and 87 percent said it was easy to navigate, suggesting that once citizens overcome awareness and access barriers, they find value in digital platforms (The Cable, 2026).

The Government Service Portal (GSP), launched in October 2024 through a collaboration between Galaxy Backbone and KOICA, represents a significant step toward improving e-government platform penetration (ITEdgeNews, 2024). The GSP is designed as a unified digital platform that streamlines access to public services, enabling citizens to interact seamlessly with multiple government agencies without the need for in-person visits (Punch, 2024). Through the portal, citizens can access critical services such as NIN Registration, Immigration Services, healthcare, and more with little or no need to visit physical offices. The GSP supports Nigeria's digitization of public services; ensuring citizens across the country can access essential services, regardless of their location (ITEdgeNews, 2024). The platform reduces the need for face-to-face interactions, offering real-time tracking of services, fostering transparency, and building trust in public institutions (ITEdgeNews, 2024).

State-level initiatives have also demonstrated the potential of e-government platforms to enhance citizen access. Anambra State's SmartGov platform, launched in December 2025, provides residents with access to more than 31 government services through a single digital gateway (Voice of Nigeria, 2025). Powered by artificial intelligence, SmartGov enables citizens to interact with government through natural conversations rather than complex paperwork or bureaucratic procedures (Punch, 2025). The platform covers eight major service categories: Taxes and Revenue, Land and Property, Business Services, Health, Education, Security and Complaints, Transport and Vehicles, and Culture and Tourism. Through a simple three-step process, users can ask questions in plain language, receive AI-driven guidance, and complete transactions online, via WhatsApp, or through voice-enabled access. With 24-hour availability and multilingual support in English and Igbo, the platform removes traditional barriers such as office hours, physical location, and unnecessary bureaucracy. Anambra State's recognition at the National Council on Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, where it won four national awards including Best Overall Performing State in Digital Technology Development and best State in Human Capital Development, demonstrates the potential of State-level digitalization initiatives (Voice of Nigeria, 2025).

Another pressing concern illuminated in this paper revolves around the persistent digital divide characterized by infrastructure deficits and low digital literacy. The National Broadband Plan (NBP) 2020-2025 aimed for 70 percent broadband penetration by the end of 2025; however, as of July 2025, penetration stood at just 48.01 percent, a significant shortfall. The country also missed its interim target of 50 percent penetration by the end of 2023, achieving only 43.71

percent by that time. Today, about 25 million people are either unserved or underserved in Nigeria (Guardian, 2025). The Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy has confirmed that no fewer than 20 million Nigerians still lack access to internet services. In a concerning trend, the number of active Internet subscribers in Nigeria has seen a notable decline, dropping from 163.8 million to 139.2 million between December 2023 and December 2024, largely attributed to SIM-NIN linkage issues (Guardian, 2025).

The digital divide is particularly pronounced between urban and rural areas. While urban centres like Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt enjoy increasing digital penetration, vast rural regions in States such as Kebbi, Taraba, Niger, Cross River and parts of the South-east still struggle with weak or non-existent connectivity. This divide has widened over the years as Nigeria's economy becomes more digital-driven. Government services are moving online, schools are transitioning to e-learning systems, businesses depend on digital payments, and agriculture increasingly relies on data-based solutions. However, communities without stable internet access cannot participate in or benefit from these advancements, deepening inequality between connected and unconnected populations (AllAfrica, 2025). The cost of connectivity represents another significant barrier. When the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) approved a 50 percent data tariff hike in January 2025, the cost of 1GB of data jumped from N287.50 to N431.25, with higher-volume bundles witnessing even steeper increases. This affordability constraint disproportionately affects low-income citizens, who are already less likely to have access to digital devices and skills. The dearth of last-mile infrastructure further compounds the problem. The cost of laying fibre optic cables, the backbone of high-speed last-mile connectivity, ranges from \$5,000 to \$15,000 per kilometre in developing countries like Nigeria, with significant capital expenditures exacerbated by regulatory hurdles and high right-of-way fees imposed by State governments (Guardian, 2025).

Digital literacy represents another critical dimension of the digital divide. Research has shown that low digital literacy among government officials and citizens constrains the adoption and effectiveness of e-governance initiatives (KWASU, undated). The 774 Local Government Digital Service Space Programme, implemented by NITDA, is designed to embed digital infrastructure and services at the community level, bringing connectivity, training, and service delivery closer to the grassroots (NITDA, 2025). The programme aims to achieve 70 percent literacy by 2027 and 95 percent by 2030, creating the baseline skills Nigerians need to participate in the digital economy (NITDA, 2025). Cross River State has implemented initiatives to equip civil servants with digital skills for successful service delivery (ScienceDirect, 2025). Zamfara State has become the first in Nigeria to adopt a Digital Literacy Framework (ZDLF) to equip its people with essential digital skills for inclusive economic growth, e-governance, and innovation.

Platform interoperability and integration represent a third critical challenge. The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has emphasized that digital identity serves as the central nervous system of e-governance, with the Director General describing it as the foundation of e-government initiatives. Without a verified digital identity, e-government initiatives create silos, redundancy, and exclusion (Businessday, 2025). The National Identification Number (NIN) is already enabling interoperability across platforms, making it possible for banks, telecoms, and government agencies to deliver more secure and inclusive services. Over 126 million citizens have now been enrolled in the National Identity Database, with over 125 agencies integrated into the NIN ecosystem, including the Nigeria Immigration Service, Federal Inland Revenue Service, and National Population Commission (The Sun, 2025).

The Federal Government has approved the NIMC NIN Authentication (NINAuth) to secure and seamless identity verification and authentication. With NINAuth, individuals can securely verify their identity and access key government services, including SIM registration and replacement, immigration applications and passport processing, tax filings and financial transactions, driver's license renewals, and other regulatory processes (Daily Trust, 2025). President Tinubu has mandated the use of NIN authentication across all MDAs, noting that with the NINAuth, every citizen and legal resident of Nigeria will benefit from a unified National Identity Database that will power social programmes, improve electoral integrity, enhance healthcare access, and promote the equitable distribution of our commonwealth (State House, 2025).

However, significant interoperability challenges remain. The Digital Public Infrastructure Framework, unveiled in March 2025, proposes a whole-of-government approach to reforming public service delivery and provides a platform for the private sector to participate in building and delivering services that improve access and citizen well-being. The framework aims to enhance interoperability between platforms, ensure data security and privacy, improve accessibility for all users including marginalised groups, set performance benchmarks, and promote innovation through open-source tools (Punch, 2025). The National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2025, which is the first-of-its-kind on the continent, seeks to establish a unified legal and regulatory framework to support AI adoption, cloud computing, and digital public sector transformation (ITEdgeNews, 2026). The bill provides a solid legal framework for digital governance, data protection, cybersecurity, and inclusive access to technology, ensuring that no Nigerian whether urban or rural is left behind in the nation's digital future.

Citizen trust and satisfaction represent a fourth critical factor shaping access to digital government services. Research has shown that weak trust in government constrains citizens' adoption of ICT-enabled services in Nigeria despite extensive investment. Citizen satisfaction also plays a central role in shaping perceptions of e-governance: when services delivered

through digital platforms were timely, reliable, and responsive, citizens tended to view them positively (Ishola et al., 2025). The Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) has emphasized that privacy is the cornerstone of public trust, with the NDPC CEO stressing that "without privacy, we cannot achieve efficient e-government services. The NDPC has urged government developers to prioritise data protection and privacy to gain citizens' trust, emphasising that safeguarding personal information is essential for building public confidence and maintaining long-term credibility (NDPC, 2025).

The Citizens' Delivery Tracker experience illustrates the trust challenge. Among CDT users, only about a third of complaints were resolved fully or partially, with about 43 percent of complaints receiving no feedback (The Cable, 2026). The Accountability Lab Nigeria emphasised that delayed or missing responses risk disillusioning citizens, noting that "Government is doing so much, but citizens are not feeling the impact. There is a misalignment between government action and the actual needs of citizens" (The Cable, 2026). This misalignment between government action and citizen perception represents a fundamental challenge to building the trust necessary for widespread adoption of digital government services.

The CIAPS' Panorama CGPI e-Governance Report (2025) provides a comprehensive assessment of the State of digital governance across Nigeria's 36 States. The report found that while a few States, such as Lagos, Anambra, and Abia, demonstrated strong digital governance practices, many others lagged dangerously behind (Guardian, 2025). Adamawa ranked zero in digital governance as the state's website remains inaccessible, while Rivers State is also at the bottom of the chart. Katsina and Niger States were singled out for having non-functional or broken contact forms, outdated content, and poor user interface design, effectively cutting off citizens from government information and services (Guardian, 2025). Imo State's website was riddled with broken links and filled with political propaganda rather than public service information. Taraba and Katsina also ranked low for infrequent updates and lack of maintenance. The report also flagged widespread poor communication of policies and limited public access to fiscal data, citing Kebbi, Sokoto, and Bayelsa States for weak budget transparency (Guardian, 2025).

The 7th Nigeria e-Government Summit, held in Lagos in 2025, brought together policymakers, private sector leaders, and civil society to outline a roadmap for building secure, citizen-centred digital service. The summit identified four key pillars for Nigeria's e-government future: digital identity, cybersecurity, data protection, and broadband connectivity. The summit emphasized that public-private partnerships remain the key to citizen-centred digital governance, with the president of the Association of Telecommunication Companies of Nigeria (ATCON) arguing that no government can singlehandedly deliver seamless online services. The summit showcased transformative e-government pilot projects that have improved service timelines, reduced costs, and increased satisfaction, connecting federal, state, and local governments with private innovators and producing actionable reforms in procurement, policy, and data governance (Guardian, 2025).

The Nigeria e-Government Summit also highlighted the significant economic benefits of digitalization. The Treasury Single Account has saved over N10 trillion, and the Integrated Payroll System has eliminated 70,000 ghost workers. Digitizing government payments could add as much as 4.5 percent to Nigeria's GDP annually, with digital processes already proven to be 74 percent faster than in-person equivalents. However, the summit also warned that issues like the digital divide, low literacy, and cybercrime could stall progress if not urgently addressed through lawful data collection and stronger cybersecurity frameworks (Businessday, 2025).

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the issues raised and discussed in this paper, it is observed that e-government platform penetration, digital literacy and infrastructure, interoperability and integration, and citizen trust and satisfaction are the critical factors shaping the relationship between digitalization of public service delivery and citizen access to government services in Nigeria. Despite significant policy initiatives including the National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2025, the Digital Public Infrastructure Framework, and the Government Service Portal, Nigeria continues to face substantial challenges in achieving meaningful digital transformation of public service delivery. The country ranks 140th out of 193 nations on the UN E-Government Development Index, with broadband penetration at only 48 percent as of July 2025, and over 20 million Nigerians lacking internet access.

The paper therefore submits that digitalization represents a necessary but insufficient condition for improving citizen access to government services. The mere availability of digital platforms does not guarantee citizen access, as evidenced by the "high-demand, low-utilisation" paradox identified in the Citizens' Delivery Tracker, where 82 percent of citizens expressed interest in tracking government performance but 74 percent had never used the platform. The digital divide characterized by disparities in broadband penetration, digital literacy, and affordability represents a fundamental constraint on citizen access, particularly for rural and low-income populations. The lack of platform interoperability and integration creates silos that exclude citizens who lack verified digital identities, while weak citizen trust in government digital platforms reflected in low complaint resolution rates and limited feedback responsiveness further constrains adoption.

The paper concludes that achieving meaningful citizen access to digital government services in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that addresses not only the supply-side factors of platform availability and infrastructure but also the demand-side factors of digital literacy, citizen trust, and inclusive design. As the Nigeria e-Government Summit 2025

emphasized, public-private partnerships, digital identity, cybersecurity, data protection, and broadband connectivity are the foundational pillars of Nigeria's e-government future. The National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2025, once passed into law, will lay a firm foundation for a digitally empowered Nigeria, but its success will depend on effective implementation, sustained investment, and a genuine commitment to citizen-centred governance.

5.2 Recommendations

To address the challenges of digitalization of public service delivery and enhance citizen access to government services in Nigeria, the following recommendations are offered based on the findings of this paper:

- i. The Federal Government should accelerate broadband deployment to achieve the 70 percent penetration target, prioritizing underserved and rural areas through the deployment of 90,000 kilometres of fibre-optic infrastructure and nearly 4,000 new communication towers in underserved communities, as proposed by the Minister of Communications (AllAfrica, 2025). State governments should waive right-of-way charges to accelerate fibre rollout, as 11 States have already done (Businessday, 2025).
- ii. Digital literacy programmes should be expanded and scaled across all States, building on the models established by NITDA's 774 Local Government Digital Service Space Programme, Cross River State's civil service digital skills initiatives, and Zamfara State's Digital Literacy Framework. The target of 70 percent literacy by 2027 and 95 percent by 2030 should be pursued with urgency.
- iii. The Government Service Portal (GSP) should be fully rolled out across all government ministries and departments, with the 12 pilot agencies serving as models for broader adoption. The GSP should be mobile-friendly and accessible in multiple languages to cater to Nigeria's diverse population. State governments should emulate Anambra State's SmartGov model, leveraging artificial intelligence to simplify citizen access to government services.
- iv. Platform interoperability should be strengthened through full implementation of the Digital Public Infrastructure Framework and the National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2025. The NIN Authentication (NINAuth) system should be fully deployed across all MDAs to enable secure and seamless identity verification and authentication. The integration of over 125 agencies into the NIN ecosystem should be completed, ensuring that citizens can access all government services through a unified digital identity.
- v. Citizen trust in digital government services should be strengthened through improved complaint resolution mechanisms, transparent feedback processes, and robust data protection frameworks. The Citizens' Delivery Tracker (CDT) should be optimised to address low awareness and weak responses to citizen complaints, with the government simplifying the feedback process to reduce abandonment rates and prioritising security by enforcing multi-factor authentication for administrative accounts. The Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) should continue to emphasise that privacy is the cornerstone of public trust, ensuring that citizens' personal information is safeguarded.
- vi. State governments should prioritise digital platforms for communication, service delivery, and accountability, as recommended by the CIAPS' Panorama CGPI e-Governance Report. Mandatory content audits, standardised engagement systems, full e-service integration, and digital capacity-building for civil servants should be implemented across all States. States with non-functional or inaccessible websites including Adamawa, Rivers, Katsina, and Niger should receive technical assistance to establish functional digital governance platforms.
- vii. The National Assembly should pass the National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2025 into law without delay, establishing a unified legal and regulatory framework to support AI adoption, cloud computing, and digital public sector transformation. The bill's provisions for digital governance, data protection, cybersecurity, and inclusive access to technology should be fully implemented to ensure that no Nigerian, whether urban or rural, is left behind in the nation's digital future.

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