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Digital Transformation in Public Policy: A Systematic Literature Review of E-Government Implementation and Its Impact on Public Services

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ABSTRACT
Purpose: *The purpose of this study is to systematically identify, analyze, and synthesize scientific literature on the implementation of e-government and its impact on public service quality. By employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by PRISMA standards, the research seeks to clarify how digital transformation in governance contributes to efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction in public service delivery.*
Method: *The study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, strictly following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The selection process screened scientific databases and identified 10 articles published between 2015 and 2025 that met the inclusion criteria. These articles were then analyzed to extract insights on e-government implementation and its outcomes for public service quality.*
Findings: *The findings reveal that e-government initiatives significantly enhance public service efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction, provided they are supported by institutional reform, digital competency development, and inclusive access strategies. However, several challenges persist, including gaps in digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy among bureaucrats, institutional resistance to change, and risks of digital exclusion among marginalized groups.*
Implications: *This study highlight the necessity of a holistic approach to e-government implementation. Sustainable improvements in public service delivery require not only technological investment but also capacity building in human resources, strengthening of legal frameworks, and genuine citizen engagement. Policymakers and practitioners must therefore integrate digital transformation with broader governance reforms to ensure inclusivity and long-term impact.*
Originality: *This study contributes originality by synthesizing recent literature on e-government within the 2015–2025 timeframe, offering a comprehensive overview of both benefits and challenges. Its emphasis on integrating technological, institutional, and social dimensions provides a nuanced perspective that goes beyond technical efficiency, underscoring the importance of inclusive and reform-oriented strategies in digital governance.*

Keywords: *digital transformation, e-government, public service, systematic literature review, public policy*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become one of the most disruptive forces reshaping the way governments worldwide design, implement, and evaluate their public policies (West, 2016). In the past decade, pressures from multiple directions, ranging from the demands of increasingly tech-savvy citizens, global competition for efficient governance, and the impact of the pandemic, which has accelerated the digitalization of government services, have placed e-government at the center of bureaucratic reform agendas in almost every country (World Bank, 2016). E-government, simply understood as the use of

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information and communication technology to deliver government functions and services, is no longer merely an innovative option but has shifted to become a strategic imperative for any government seeking to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of its citizens in the digital age. Janowski (2015) emphasized that the evolution of digital government proceeds through four stages: digitization, transformation, engagement, and contextualization, demonstrating that the journey to mature e-government is not simply a matter of technology but involves fundamental changes in the way governments understand and serve their citizens. A comprehensive understanding of where a country sits on this evolutionary spectrum is a crucial starting point for designing effective, relevant, and sustainable digital transformation policies within each country's context.

The theoretical foundations supporting the study of digital transformation in public policy have evolved rapidly since the 1990s, with the emergence of the internet as a global communications infrastructure that fundamentally changed citizens' expectations of government. Mergel, Edelmann, and Haug (2019), through a series of in-depth interviews with experts, define digital transformation as a comprehensive process of change that touches the core of government organizations, encompassing processes, routines, service models, and relationships with citizens, triggered by the massive and sustained introduction of digital technology. This definition is crucial because it clearly distinguishes between the mere digitization of existing procedures (digitization) and true transformation (digital transformation), where the latter requires a paradigmatic shift in the way governments operate and create public value. This perspective opens up a more substantive discussion about whether the various e-government initiatives launched by governments in various countries have truly reached the level of transformation, or simply the digitization of old bureaucratic working methods with new technological packaging that does not actually change the substance of services to citizens in a meaningful way.

In the public value generated by e-government, Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019) through their systematic literature review identified six dimensions of public value expected from e-government implementation: improved government services, organizational effectiveness, government openness, ethical behavior and competence, public trust in government, and broader social welfare. This public value framework is crucial because it provides a richer perspective than simply measuring efficiency or cost savings in the use of technology in the government sector. When governments implement e-government systems, the most fundamental question to be answered is not how sophisticated the technology is, but rather how much real value is perceived by citizens as the ultimate recipients of the service (Weerakkody et al., 2013). The gap between the value promised by the e-government system design and the value actually perceived by citizens on the ground is one of the most fundamental problems that needs to be studied in depth and systematically in this research.

The challenges of e-government implementation vary depending on a country's socio-economic context, bureaucratic culture, and technological maturity. In developing countries, these challenges are often more fundamental and structural, including a wide gap in technological infrastructure, low digital literacy among both government officials and users, limited budgets for investment and maintenance of technology systems, and bureaucratic cultural resistance that views digitalization as a threat to existing positions and authority. Alcaide Muñoz, Rodríguez Bolívar, and López Hernández (2017) show that transparency achieved through e-government depends heavily on political commitment and institutional capacity to produce and disseminate relevant, accurate, and easily accessible information to all levels of society. Without such commitment and capacity, even e-government platforms built with significant investment can become mere digital shells that have no substantive impact on improving transparency or accountability in government.

The development of scientific studies on e-government has experienced rapid growth in the past decade, driven by the increasing adoption of digital technology in the public sector around the world. Gil-Garcia, Dawes, and Pardo (2018) mapped the development of digital government as an increasingly established and interdisciplinary discipline, combining the perspectives of public administration, information systems, political science, and sociology to understand the complexities of digital transformation in the government sector. This research map shows that despite this rapid growth in the literature, significant gaps remain in understanding the factors that determine the success or failure of e-government implementation in various contexts, particularly in developing countries with their attendant limitations. This gap is even more pronounced considering that the majority of existing e-government models and theoretical frameworks were developed in the context of developed countries, whose conditions differ markedly from the realities faced by developing countries, which require the most relevant and actionable guidance.

Given the urgency and complexity outlined above, this study aims to provide a systematic mapping of the current scientific literature on e-government implementation and its impact on public

services in the 2015–2025 period. The problem formulation in this study includes three main questions: (1) What factors predominantly influence the success of e-government implementation in improving the quality of public services? (2) What are the systemic challenges that hinder digital transformation in governance? and (3) What impacts has e-government implementation had on citizen satisfaction and the quality of public services in a measurable manner? The purpose of this study is to identify, synthesize, and analyze the current scientific literature on digital transformation in public policy through a systematic and transparent SLR approach, in order to produce a synthesis of knowledge that can serve as a reference for researchers, government practitioners, and policymakers in designing e-government implementation strategies that are more effective, inclusive, and have a real impact on improving the quality of public services in a sustainable manner.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, a scientific synthesis research method that aims to systematically, transparently, and replicably identify, evaluate, and interpret all scientific evidence relevant to a specific research question. SLR was chosen for its ability to generate a comprehensive knowledge map of literature spread across multiple sources while minimizing selection bias (Page et al., 2021). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were used as a reporting framework to ensure the quality, transparency, and completeness of the review process.

2.2. Sources and Data Collection

The literature search was conducted in trusted, openly accessible scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), and Semantic Scholar. Keywords used included: "e-government," "digital transformation," "public service delivery," "digital government," "citizen satisfaction," "public administration digitalization," "e-government implementation," and combinations thereof using the Boolean operators AND/OR. The search was limited to articles published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the relevance and recency of the literature used in the analysis.

Inclusion Criteria:
1. Articles published between 2015 and 2025
2. Articles in Indonesian or English
3. Discuss e-government implementation and its impact on public services
4. Available in open access or accessible through trusted databases
5. Are peer-reviewed empirical research articles or conceptual studies

Exclusion Criteria:
1. Articles in the form of editorials, short opinion pieces, or book reviews
2. Articles that do not specifically discuss e-government or digital transformation in the context of public services
3. Articles whose full text cannot be accessed
4. Articles that are duplicates of different search results

2.3. Article Selection Process

The selection process was conducted in four stages according to the PRISMA process (Figure 1). The first stage was identification, which identified a total of 336 articles from all databases used. The second stage was screening based on titles and abstracts. After removing 38 duplicates, 298 unique articles were obtained. These were then filtered, leaving 65 relevant articles. The third stage was eligibility assessment based on full-text reading, in which 55 articles were excluded due to irrelevance, inaccessibility, or inadequate methodological quality. The fourth stage was final inclusion, resulting in 10 final articles used as the basis for the analysis in this study.

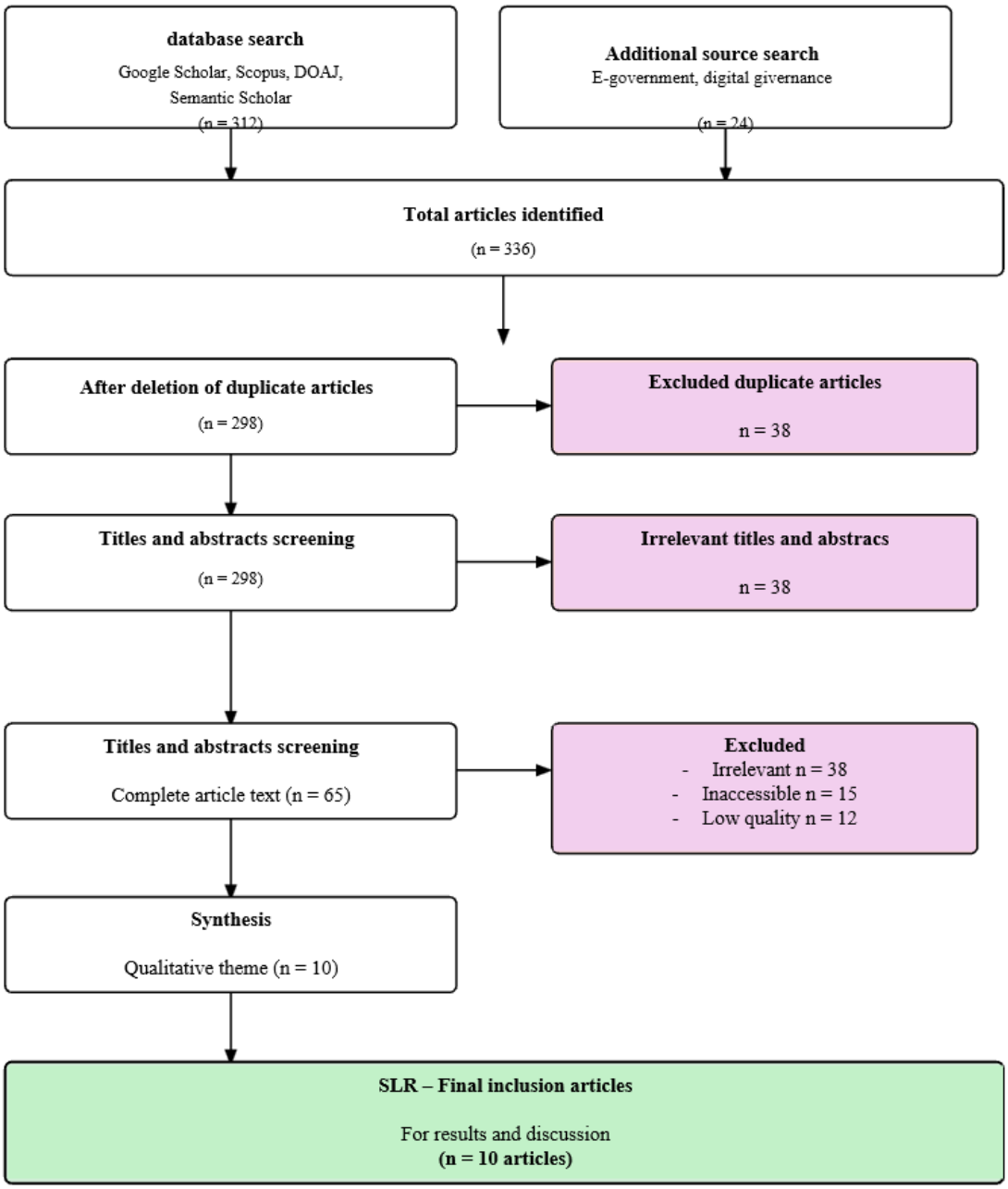

Figure 1. Article Selection Stages with PRISMA
Source: Processed data – 2025

The PRISMA diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the rigorous process undertaken in conducting the Systematic Literature Review. It begins with the identification stage, where a total of 336 articles were collected from multiple databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, and Semantic Scholar, along with additional sources focusing on e-government and digital governance. After removing 38 duplicates, 298 articles remained for screening. Titles and abstracts were then carefully reviewed, leading to the exclusion of 38 irrelevant studies. From the remaining pool, 65 full-text articles were assessed in detail. At this stage, 15 were excluded due to inaccessibility, 12 for low quality, and 38 for irrelevance, leaving only 10 articles that met all inclusion criteria. These final articles were synthesized qualitatively to extract themes and insights, forming the foundation for the results and discussion. The flowchart thus demonstrates the transparent and methodical filtering process that ensures the reliability and validity of the review findings.

2.4. Data Extraction and Analysis

Data were extracted from each article using a standardized extraction form that included: author name, year of publication, title, journal, study context, research methods, key findings, and policy implications. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify dominant patterns, trends, and themes emerging from the included literature.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. General Characteristics of Included Articles

Based on the selection results using the PRISMA protocol, 10 articles were identified that met all inclusion criteria and were ready for thematic analysis. These articles came from various reputable international journals indexed in trusted scientific databases, covering public administration, government information systems, digital public policy, and governance. In terms of publication year, the articles were distributed between 2015 and 2025, with a significant concentration in the 2019–2024 period, indicating increasing global academic interest in the digital transformation of government, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which has become a major accelerator of e-government adoption worldwide. In terms of methodology, there is considerable variation, ranging from systematic literature reviews and quantitative survey-based research to qualitative case studies and conceptual studies based on expert interviews. The geographic context of the research encompasses Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe, and South Asia, as well as cross-country comparative studies, reflecting the global relevance of this topic.

Table 1 presents a summary of the 10 included articles, including information on the authors, year of publication, title, journal, methods, and key findings for each article in a structured manner.

Table 1. Results of Journal Inclusion in the Systematic Literature Review

No	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Method	Findings
1	Janowski	2015	Digital government evolution: From transformation to contextualization	*Government Information Quarterly*	Conceptual	The evolution of e-government goes through 4 stages; success depends on the contextualization of digital policies.
2	Alcaide Muñoz, Rodríguez Bolívar & López Hernández	2017	Transparency in governments: A meta-analytic review of incentives for digital versus hard-copy public financial disclosures	*The American Review of Public Administration*	Meta-analisys	Administrative culture and accounting regime factors moderate the effectiveness of e-government transparency.
3	Gil-Garcia, Dawes & Pardo	2018	Digital government and public management research	*Public Management Review*	Literature Review	The digital government research map shows the urgency of integrating IS and public administration perspectives.
4	Mergel, Edelmann & Haug	2019	Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews	*Government Information Quarterly*	Qualitative-Interviews	Digital transformation of government includes changes to core processes, service models, and relationships with citizens.
5	Twizeyimana & Andersson	2019	The public value of E-government: A literature review	*Government Information Quarterly*	Literature Review	E-government is expected to produce 6 dimensions of public value; public services are at the core of all these values.
6	Mensah, Zeng & Luo	2020	E-government services adoption:	*SAGE Open*	Quantitativ e-Survey	Trust, perceived benefits, and social

No	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Method	Findings
			An extension of the unified model of electronic government adoption			influence significantly drive e-government adoption.
7	Haug, Dan & Mergel	2023	Digitally-induced change in the public sector: A systematic review and research agenda	*Public Management Review*	SLR–Analisys Bibliometric	Changes resulting from digital technology are multidimensional; actors are more decisive than the technology itself.
8	Ferreira & Santos	2025	Digital transformation in public sector: Systematic literature review	*Enhancing Public Sector Accountability and Services Through Digital Innovation* (IGI Global)	SLR–PRISMA	AI, blockchain, and IoT are key technologies driving e-government innovation.
9	Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek & Zyzak	2025	Digital technologies in public administration networks: Systematic literature review and research avenues	*Administration & Society*	SLR–PRISMA	Digital research in public administration networks remains fragmented; AI and blockchain are starting to dominate.
10	Kasmiah, Rahman & Hossain	2024	E-government implementation challenges in developing countries: A systematic review	*Journal of Public Administration and Governance*	SLR	Developing countries face infrastructure, human resource, and institutional resistance barriers in implementing e-government.

Source: Previous research – PRISMA results

3.2. Factors Influencing the Success of E-Government Implementation

The results of a thematic analysis of the 10 included articles identified four main themes that consistently emerged throughout the literature related to the success of e-government implementation and its impact on public services.

Technological Maturity and Digital Policy Contextualization

The first, fundamental theme in the analyzed literature is the importance of digital policy contextualization as a prerequisite for e-government success. Janowski (2015) firmly asserts that e-government is not simply a matter of implementing government software or websites, but rather an evolutionary journey that requires contextual adaptation to the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions of each country. Janowski's four-stage evolutionary model, from digitization to transformation, then engagement, and finally contextualization, provides a useful roadmap for understanding why successful e-government programs in one country cannot be simply transplanted to another without in-depth adaptation. Ferreira and Santos (2025) strengthen this argument by finding that the digital transformation journey in the public sector is heavily influenced by local socioeconomic contexts, making it impossible to draw uniform conclusions that apply across contexts. This finding has crucial policy implications: a one-size-fits-all approach to e-government implementation is likely to fail, and policy design that fully considers the readiness and unique context of each country is needed.

Mergel et al. (2019) found, through in-depth interviews with experts, that government leaders who successfully implement digital transformation generally understand the fundamental difference between simply digitizing legacy procedures and truly transforming the way government operates and creates value for its citizens. True transformation requires change at two levels simultaneously: internally within the organization (processes, routines, employee competencies) and externally (relationships with citizens, service models, and public expectations). When governments focus solely on the internal level without considering the increasingly changing expectations of citizens, e-

government systems built with significant investment risk becoming irrelevant to the true users, the citizens who are expected to utilize these services. This finding underscores the urgency of a truly citizen-centric approach to digital transformation that goes beyond simply modernizing technological infrastructure (United Nations, 2022).

Public Value and Citizen Satisfaction as Indicators of Success

A second prominent theme in the analyzed literature is measuring e-government success through the prism of public value and citizen satisfaction. Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019) found in their literature review that research on e-government public value is still dominated by the dimension of improving government services, while broader dimensions such as developing social welfare and strengthening public trust in government have not received adequate attention from the research community. This suggests a bias in how researchers and practitioners measure e-government success, focusing too much on process and output indicators (how many services have been successfully digitized) rather than outcome and impact indicators (how much quality of life and citizen trust in government have actually improved). This shift in perspective from measuring outputs to measuring outcomes needs to be a key agenda in future e-government policy evaluations.

Mensah, Zeng, and Luo (2020) empirically demonstrated that citizen adoption of e-government is highly dependent on three key factors: trust in the system and government, perceived tangible benefits from using digital services, and social influence from the surrounding environment. When these three factors are not adequately met, even the most sophisticated e-government implementations will face low user adoption rates—a costly but all-too-common failure in many countries. The implications of this research are clear: e-government design and implementation cannot be separated from a deep understanding of user psychology and behavior, as well as the socio-cultural context that shapes citizens' perceptions of and trust in government institutions. Investments in building public trust in e-government systems must go hand in hand with investments in developing their technological infrastructure.

Transparency, Accountability, and Digital Governance

A third crucial theme is the role of digital transformation in promoting government transparency and accountability. Alcaide et al. (2017) meta-analysis confirmed that e-government implementation has significant potential to promote public information transparency, but its effectiveness is significantly moderated by the administrative culture and accounting regimes prevailing in each country. Countries with administrative cultures that support information transparency have been shown to be more successful in leveraging digital platforms to enhance transparency, while countries with closed bureaucratic cultures tend to use the same technology to simply fulfill formal reporting obligations without substantially increasing transparency. These findings confirm that technology is value-neutral—it merely amplifies the capacities and intentions of the actors using it, rather than automatically resulting in better governance.

Gil-Garcia, Dawes, and Pardo (2018) mapped the development of digital government research and found that studies on technology-based accountability and transparency remain highly fragmented and have not yet produced a comprehensive enough model to guide policy reform. Most research tends to focus on a single aspect, such as public information portals or electronic procurement systems, without considering how various e-government components interact synergistically to produce more transparent and accountable governance overall. A more integrative and holistic approach to e-government research and policy is becoming an increasingly urgent need as the digital government ecosystem becomes increasingly complex in the era of artificial intelligence and big data.

Institutional Challenges and the Digital Divide

A fourth theme that consistently emerged throughout the literature analyzed was the various institutional challenges and digital divides that hinder the successful implementation of e-government. In their systematic review, Kasmiah, Rahman, and Hossain (2024) identified that developing countries face more complex and multi-layered barriers than developed countries, including a wide technological infrastructure deficit, low digital literacy among government officials and the public, limited budgets for investment and system maintenance, and bureaucratic cultural resistance that perceives digitalization as a threat to established positions and authority. These barriers are not isolated but reinforce each other in a cycle that is difficult to break without comprehensive reform interventions that boldly address the structural roots of the problems.

Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek and Zyzak (2025) in their systematic review found that research on digital technologies in public administration networks remains highly fragmented, with a predominance of studies focusing on governance and collaborative networks, while policy networks, which are most critical for ensuring e-government generates meaningful policy change, remain largely under-researched. Haug, Dan, and Mergel (2023) add a critical dimension by finding that changes induced by digitalization in the public sector are multidimensional and cannot be reduced to technological factors alone. Rather, it is human actors and their organizational contexts that ultimately determine whether digital transformation will result in real improvements or simply the reproduction of old ways of working in a new digital package without any substantive changes.

4. CONCLUSION

This research successfully identified and synthesized 10 selected scientific articles on e-government implementation and its impact on public services using the Systematic Literature Review method, following the PRISMA guidelines for the 2015–2025 period. Based on a comprehensive thematic analysis, the following key conclusions can be drawn:

Digital transformation in public policy through e-government is a complex, multidimensional, and highly context-dependent phenomenon, and therefore cannot be adequately understood through a technological lens alone. The success of e-government is determined by the dynamic interaction between technological maturity, institutional capacity, political commitment, bureaucratic culture, and the readiness and trust of citizens as the actual end users of digital services. A one-size-fits-all approach to e-government implementation has been shown to be prone to failure, while a contextualized and adaptive approach that respects the unique social, economic, and cultural conditions of each country has a much higher probability of success.

Public value must be the primary compass in designing and evaluating e-government implementation, not merely technical indicators such as the number of digitized services or the level of user penetration of digital platforms. Only when e-government is designed and implemented with a true orientation toward public value—enhancing citizen trust, strengthening transparency, encouraging participation, and improving social welfare—can digital technology serve as a truly meaningful governance transformation tool for citizens' lives.

The challenges facing developing countries in implementing e-government are structural and require long-term reform interventions that address not only the technological aspects but also the institutional, human resource, and legal frameworks that support the effective operation of e-government systems. The digital divide, both in terms of infrastructure and literacy, remains a fundamental barrier that must be addressed systematically and inclusively so that the benefits of e-government can be felt by all levels of society without exception.

New technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things offer promising opportunities to push public service innovation to the next level, but they also bring new risks that must be proactively managed, including data security risks, algorithmic bias, and digital exclusivity, which can exacerbate inequalities in access between groups.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, here are five recommendations for consideration by various stakeholders: Governments and policymakers are advised to adopt a truly citizen-centric approach to e-government implementation, prioritizing tangible improvements in public value, rather than mere technological modernization, as the primary measure of success for any digital transformation initiative, along with authentic and ongoing feedback mechanisms from citizens as service users.

Academics and researchers in public administration and information systems are advised to develop a more integrative and interdisciplinary research framework capable of capturing the complex interactions between technological, institutional, social, and cultural factors in e-government implementation, with particular attention to the context of developing countries, which remains significantly underrepresented in the global literature.

International institutions and development partners are advised to prioritize investment in human resource capacity development for both government officials and citizens as a component no less important than investment in technological infrastructure, given the strong evidence from the

literature that the greatest barriers to e-government are often not the technology itself, but rather the readiness of the people who operate and use it.

For governments in other developing countries, it is recommended to develop digital transformation strategies that explicitly and proactively address the risks of digital exclusion for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, rural communities, and those with low levels of education through inclusive service design and the provision of alternative service channels that do not rely solely on digital technology.

For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal research that follows e-government implementation from the planning stage to long-term impact evaluation, specifically investigating the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain in transforming public services in developing countries, in order to generate policy recommendations based on robust empirical evidence that is relevant to local contexts.

Generative AI Statement

The authors declare that generative AI was used in the development of this manuscript. The authors affirm that, although generative AI (ChatGPT, GPT-5) was used to support the drafting of the article, all intellectual contributions, data interpretation, and final revisions were made by the authors. The authors are solely responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content.

Abbreviations

SLR – *Systematic Literature Review*
PRISMA – *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*
DOAJ – *Directory of Open Access Journals.*

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Availability of Data and Materials

This research uses a literature study method. All sources are listed in the references.

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