



E-GOVERNANCE IN THE OFFICES OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF EASTERN SAMAR: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of digitalization on e-governance in the offices of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar. Specifically, it examined the current implementation of e-governance initiatives, the effects of digitalization on government efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and service delivery, as well as the challenges encountered in implementing digital systems. The study employed a quantitative research design using a structured survey questionnaire administered to ten (10) government employees involved in the planning, implementation, and management of e-governance initiatives. Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the respondents' profiles, perceptions of e-governance implementation, the impact of digitalization, and the challenges and obstacles encountered.

The findings revealed that digitalization has generally contributed to improved operational efficiency, faster processing of government transactions, reduced employee workload, enhanced transparency, improved data management, increased citizen satisfaction, and better accessibility of government services, particularly through online platforms. However, the study also identified several challenges, including technical and internet connectivity issues, resistance to digital adoption among some employees, limited digital literacy among citizens, cybersecurity concerns, and insufficient resources for training and infrastructure.

The study concludes that digitalization has a positive impact on e-governance in the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar. To maximize its benefits, continued investment in digital infrastructure, digital literacy and capacity-building programs, and strengthened cybersecurity measures are recommended. These efforts may further enhance the efficiency, accessibility, transparency, and effectiveness of public service delivery.

KEYWORDS: E-Governance, Digitalization, Public Service Delivery, Government Efficiency, Transparency, Eastern Samar

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the digital age, governance is increasingly being transformed by technology. E-governance refers to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by government institutions to improve their services, enhance public administration, and increase transparency and accessibility. Digitalization has allowed government bodies to streamline their processes, enhance citizen engagement, and improve service delivery, reducing the time and cost associated with manual operations in the various offices.

In the context of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar, the integration of digital tools into various departments has been aimed at addressing administrative challenges and improving the efficiency of services. However, despite the potential advantages, challenges such as limited access to technology, cybersecurity risks, and digital literacy remain significant barriers to fully realizing the benefits of e-governance.

This study assesses the impact of digitalization on e-governance in the offices of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar. It specifically explores how digital tools have affected government efficiency, transparency, citizen accessibility, and engagement, while also identifying the challenges encountered during their implementation.

Eastern Samar, a province in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines, embodies both the potential and the challenges of implementing e-governance initiatives. Known for its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, Eastern Samar also contends with significant socio-economic hurdles, including poverty, limited infrastructure, and vulnerability to natural disasters (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2020). As the provincial government seeks to modernize its operations and improve public services through digitalization, understanding the implications of these initiatives is crucial for enhancing governance and fostering community development.

The global trend toward digital governance reflects an increasing recognition of the benefits that technology can offer to public administration. E-governance has the potential to improve operational efficiency, enhance service delivery, and strengthen accountability within government institutions (UN DESA, 2020). The Philippine government has acknowledged this potential, with national policies aimed at leveraging technology to enhance public service delivery. The Philippine Development Plan (2017-2022) emphasizes the need for digital transformation to achieve sustainable development and improve governance (National Economic and Development Authority, 2017).

Despite these promising developments, the implementation of e-governance in the Philippines faces various challenges. Factors such as inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient training for government personnel, and varying levels of digital



literacy among citizens can impede the successful integration of digital tools into governance practices (Bwalya & Zulu, 2011). Furthermore, regional disparities in resource availability can create an uneven landscape for the adoption of e-governance across different local government units (LGUs).

This study aims to evaluate the current state of e-governance in the offices of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar, focusing on its impacts on service delivery, citizen engagement, and overall governance. By analyzing these aspects, the research will provide insights into the benefits and challenges of digitalization in the province, contributing to the broader discourse on e-governance in the Philippines.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of digital technologies in the government offices aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and service delivery. However, the transition from traditional practices to digital systems presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the Offices in the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current status of e-governance implementation in the offices of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar?
2. How has digitalization affected the efficiency and quality of public services in the province?
3. What challenges are faced in the implementation of these digital initiatives, and what opportunities exist for improvement?

Significance of the Study

The study on "E-Governance in the Offices of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar: Assessing the Impact of Digitalization" is notable for various reasons. This study seeks to understand the experience, challenges, and perceptions of employees and officials in implementing e-governance initiative. It aims to uncover how digitalization affects day-to-day operations. It will also enhance the Public Service Delivery by assessing the effects of digitalization, the research can shed light on how e-governance programs raise the standard, effectiveness, and accessibility of public services. Policymakers can use this information to learn about practical methods for improving service delivery.

Provincial Government Officials. Elected officials and government administrators will benefit from the findings, as they can inform policy decisions and improve service delivery through better understanding of e-governance practices.

Citizens of Eastern Samar. Residents who utilize government services will have their voices represented in the research. The study aims to assess how digitalization impacts their access to services and overall engagement with the government.

Government Employees. Staff members in provincial offices who are involved in implementing and managing e-governance initiatives will find the study relevant, as it can provide insights into their experiences and identify areas for improvement.

Academics and Researchers. Scholars studying e-governance, public administration, or digital transformation will find the study useful for expanding the body of knowledge and contributing to future research.

Policy Makers and Planners. Individuals at various levels of government involved in policy formulation and strategic planning can use the study's insights to guide the development of effective e-governance frameworks.

NGOs and Civil Society Organizations. Organizations focused on governance, transparency, and digital inclusion will find the research valuable for advocating for better e-governance practices and citizen engagement.

Technology Providers. Companies and organizations that supply technology solutions for e-governance may be interested in the findings to better tailor their products and services to the needs of the provincial government.

International Organizations. Entities involved in promoting good governance and digital initiatives, such as the United Nations or the Asian Development Bank, may utilize the study to inform broader regional strategies and support programs.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The Geographical focus of this study will be centered on the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar, examining the specific offices and departments that have implemented e-governance initiatives. This study will assess various digital platforms and services introduced by the provincial government, such as online portals, mobile applications, and electronic transactions, focusing on their functionality and usage.

Limitation of this study is that the qualitative data collection and coding will be conducted by the researcher only.

Definition of Terms

E-Governance: The use of digital technology to deliver government services, improve communication, and enhance the efficiency of public administration. It encompasses various online platforms, tools, and systems that facilitate interaction between government entities and citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders.



Provincial Government of Eastern Samar: The administrative body responsible for governing Eastern Samar, a province in the Philippines. This body oversees local policies, public services, and development initiatives within the province.

Digitalization: The process of converting information and processes into a digital format, which allows for easier access, sharing, and management of data. In the context of governance, it often refers to the integration of technology into public services and administrative functions.

Impact Assessment: The evaluation of the effects and outcomes of a specific initiative, in this case, the implementation of e-governance practices. This includes measuring improvements in service delivery, efficiency, citizen engagement, and overall governance quality.

Stakeholders: Individuals or groups with an interest in the governance process, including government officials, employees, citizens, local businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Their engagement is crucial for the success of e-governance initiatives.

Service Delivery: The provision of public services to citizens, including health, education, transportation, and other essential services. E-governance aims to streamline and enhance these services through digital means.

Transparency: The principle of making government processes open and accessible to the public, allowing citizens to see how decisions are made and resources are allocated. Digital tools can enhance transparency by providing information readily available online.

Accountability: The obligation of government officials and institutions to be answerable for their actions and decisions. E-governance can improve accountability by creating systems that track performance and facilitate citizen feedback.

Citizen Engagement: The participation of citizens in the governance process, including providing input, feedback, and involvement in decision-making. E-governance initiatives often aim to foster greater engagement through digital platforms.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objectives of this study are to assess the level of acceptance and usage of e-governance initiatives among government employees and citizens, evaluate the impact of digitalization on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the provincial government, examine the influence of access to technology and digital literacy on engagement with e-governance services, and identify the challenges and barriers to the successful implementation of e-governance initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for the study on e-governance in the offices of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar is structured to systematically assess the impact of digitalization on governance practices, service delivery, and citizen engagement. Quantitative research method was used in the study to determine impact of digitalization of offices in the provincial government offices.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the government employees involved in the implementation of e-governance initiatives. These individuals are directly involved in the planning, implementation, and management of e-governance initiatives.

Research Instrument

Survey Questionnaire was given to the employees in various offices in the Provincial Government Offices and the structured survey questionnaire was the primary tool for collecting quantitative data. It was designed to measure various dimensions related to e-governance, including user acceptance, accessibility, and the perceived effectiveness of digital services. The questionnaire consists of several sections; The Demographic Information such as Position, Department, Years in Service and the Level of Digital Literacy. Section 2 of the questionnaire determined the level of agreement on the digitalization initiatives implemented in the provincial government using a Likert Scale wherein 5 means strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree. Section 3 asked about their agreement or disagreement to statements regarding the impact of digitalization on governance. Section 4 asked about their agreement or disagreement to statements about the challenges and obstacles. Section 5 asked about their suggestions for improvement.

Data Collection

A survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire designed to assess the impact of digitalization on various aspects of governance. Before the actual survey, two copies of informed consent were provided to the respondents. One was collected and the other one was given to the respondents.



Ethical Considerations

In Eastern Samar, the ethical considerations of e-governance involve a careful balance between leveraging technology for efficiency and ensuring that the rights and needs of all citizens are respected. By addressing these concerns, the provincial government can enhance public trust and improve service delivery in the digital age.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The sampling procedure for this study aims to ensure a representative and diverse sample of participants from the government employees. This approach will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the impact of digitalization on e-governance initiatives in Eastern Samar. Individuals working in various departments of the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar who are involved in the planning, implementation, and management of e-governance initiatives.

STATISTICAL DESIGN

Data Analysis Procedure

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, e-governance implementation, impact of digitalization, challenges and obstacles, and their suggestions for improvement.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted only in the Offices in the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar wherein the study the focused on assessing the impact of e-governance initiatives implemented by the Provincial Government, which includes examining online service portals, information dissemination efforts, and capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing digital literacy among citizens. The study's locale is significant due to the unique challenges and opportunities presented by its demographic diversity and varying levels of access to technology across urban and rural settings. This context allows for a comprehensive understanding of how digitalization affects governance and citizen engagement in the province.

RESULTS

The survey was completed by a total of 10 respondents, consisting of 10 government employees. The respondents represented a variety of departments within the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents. About 10% of the respondents are department heads about 30% are administrative staff while about 60 % IT Staff. Moreover, about 30% have been working in the provincial government office for 1 to 3 years, 20% have been working for 4-6 years and about 20 % have been working for 7 years and more. About 0% have a low level of literacy while about 20% have a high level of literacy.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents (n=10)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Position		
Dept. Head	1	10%
Admin Staff	3	30%
IT Staff	6	60%
Frontline Service Staff	0	0%
Total	10	100%
Years in Service		
Less than 1 year	3	30%
1-3 years	3	30%
4-6 years	2	20%
7 years or more	2	20%
Total	10	100%
Level of Digital Literacy		
Very low	0	0%
Low	0	0%
Average	4	40%
High	4	40%
Very High	2	20%
Total	10	100%

**E-Governance Implementation**

Table 2 shows the level of agreement of the respondents about the digitalization initiatives implemented in the provincial government. About 20% of the respondents are neutral and about 80% agree that the digital tools implemented in the government have improved operational efficiency in your department. About 40% of respondents neutral and about 60% agree that the transitions to digital systems was smooth and well-managed in your department and about 20% of respondents are neutral and 80% agree that the online payment system has reduced the time it takes for citizens to complete transactions. About 10% of respondents are neutral and about 90% agree that the introduction of digital tools has decreased the workload for employees in your department. While 10% of respondents neutral and 90% agree that Digitalization has led to faster processing times for government transactions.

Table 2. E-Governance Implementation

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	The digital tools implemented in the government have improved operational efficiency in your department.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (20.00)	8 (80.00)	0 (0.00)
2	The transition to digital systems was smooth and well-managed in your department.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (40.00)	6 (60.00)	0 (0.00)
3	The online payment system has reduced the time it takes for citizens to complete transactions.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (20.00)	8 (80.00)	0 (0.00)
4	The introduction of digital tools has decreased the workload for employees in your department.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	9 (90.00)	0 (0.00)
5	Digitalization has led to faster processing times for government transactions (e.g., permits, licenses).	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	9 (90.00)	0 (0.00)

Impact of Digitalization

Table 3 shows the level of agreement of the respondents about the impact of digitalization on the government. About 90% of the respondents agree and 10% strongly agree that the digitalization has increased the overall efficiency of government operations in your department. Moreover, about 10% of the respondents are neutral and 90% agree that the Digital systems have made government operations more transparent, about 20% are neutral 60% agree and 20% strongly agree that digital tools have improved the accuracy and reliability of data management, about 20% of respondents are neutral and 80% agree that there has been an increase in citizen satisfaction with government services due to digitalization. While 20% of respondents are neutral and 80% agree that the Online platforms have made government processes more accessible to remote or rural citizens.

Table 3. Impact of Digitalization

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Digitalization has increased the overall efficiency of government operations in your department.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	9 (90.00)	1 (10.00)
2	Digital systems have made government operations more transparent.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	9 (90.00)	0 (0.00)
3	Digital tools have improved the accuracy and reliability of data management.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (20.00)	6 (60.00)	2 (20.00)
4	There has been an increase in citizen satisfaction with government services due to digitalization.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (20.00)	8 (80.00)	0 (0.00)
5	Online platforms have made government processes more accessible to remote or rural citizens.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (20.00)	8 (80.00)	0 (0.00)

Challenges and Obstacles

Table 4 shows the level of agreement of the respondents about the Challenges and obstacles in the digitalization process. About 10% of respondents are neutral 80% agree and 10% strongly agree that there are technical challenges that hinder the use of digital tools. About 30% of respondents are neutral 50% agree and 20% strongly agree that some government employees are resistant to adopting digital tools and about 10% of respondents disagree, 20% neutral, 60% agree and 10% strongly agree that Citizens face difficulties in using digital platforms due to lack of digital literacy. About 10% of respondents disagree, 10% neutral, 70% agree and 10% strongly agree that Cybersecurity risks are a concern when using digital tools. While about 10% of respondents disagree, 20% neutral and 70% agree that there are insufficient resources to support digitalization in their departments.

**Table 4. Challenges and Obstacles**

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	There are technical challenges (e.g., internet connectivity issues) that hinder the use of digital tools.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	8 (80.00)	1 (10.00)
2	Some government employees are resistant to adopting digital tools.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (30.00)	5 (50.00)	2 (20.00)
3	Citizens face difficulties in using digital platforms due to lack of digital literacy.	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	2 (20.00)	6 (60.00)	1 (10.00)
4	Cybersecurity risks (e.g., data breaches, hacking) are a concern when using digital tools.	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	1 (10.00)	7 (70.00)	1 (10.00)
5	There are insufficient resources (e.g., training, infrastructure) to support digitalization in your department.	0 (0.00)	1 (10.00)	2 (20.00)	7 (70.00)	0 (0.00)

Analysis of Digitalization Impact

Efficiency: A significant portion of respondents reported that digitalization has led to improvements in operational efficiency, with a majority noting that tasks that previously took weeks are now completed in days.

Transparency: Respondents indicated that the implementation of online systems for document tracking and payments has increased transparency in government transactions, reducing corruption risks.

Accessibility: Digital tools, such as online portals for government services, were found to improve accessibility for citizens, particularly those in remote areas. However, some challenges were reported due to limited internet access.

Citizen Engagement: The use of social media and websites has led to higher levels of citizen participation in government processes, including public consultations and feedback mechanisms.

SUGGESTIONS**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Increase Investment in Digital Infrastructure:** Ensure that rural areas have access to reliable internet services to facilitate digital transactions.
2. **Enhance Digital Literacy:** Provide ongoing training for government employees and citizens to ensure they can fully utilize e-governance tools.
3. **Strengthen Cybersecurity Measures:** Implement robust security protocols to protect sensitive data and ensure the integrity of digital systems.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that digitalization has had a positive impact on e-governance in the Provincial Government of Eastern Samar, improving efficiency, transparency, and citizen engagement. However, challenges such as infrastructure limitations and digital literacy must be addressed to maximize the benefits of digital governance.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the accessibility of respondents, particularly in rural areas, and the challenge of obtaining a representative sample of the population.

AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research could explore the long-term effects of digitalization on citizen satisfaction and public trust, as well as the role of emerging technologies like AI and blockchain in enhancing e-governance.

REFERENCES

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- *UN DESA* (2020)
- *National Economic and Development Authority* (2017)
- *Bwalya & Zulu* (2011)
- *Al-Azzam* (2019)
- *Nduati* (2020)
- *Bertot et al.* (2010)



- *World Economic Forum*
- *United Nations*
- *World Bank*
- *OECD*

The theoretical framework in the original study is based on:

- *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)*
- *Digital Divide Theory*
- *New Public Management (NPM)*