

**DIGITALISATION AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN UGANDA**

**A CASE STUDY OF PALLISA DISTRICT**

**BY**

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**BU/UP/2021/3091**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT**

**SCIENCES, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT IN**

**PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF AWARD**

**OF A BACHELOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**OF BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST, 2025**

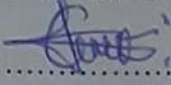
### DECLARATION

I **Masette Marvin** do ratify that this research report is my own work which has never been submitted for examination in this university for academic qualification.

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## APPROVAL

This report is submitted to Busitema University as a partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelors of Public Administration with my approval as the internal supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the family of Kisaka Willy Masette, and Ms. Buteme Rosebud for enabling me and also to my siblings Kisaka Kevin Gift, Kisaka Levin, Kisaka Crevan Larry for their moral support, encouragement and understanding. To all my friends, course mates, lecturers, and the Almighty God for his unceasing blessings without which it is impossible to ensure the proposal submission a reality.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am grateful to the almighty God that; he has given me the gift of life, as well to my parents, and friends, who gave me opportunity to be in school and guided me throughout this study and writing of this report.

My heartfelt thanks go to my parents Kisaka Willy Masette, and Ms. Buteme Rosebud who generously provided me with financial, emotional and social support while carrying out this study and throughout my entire course.

Great thanks go to my supervisor Mr. Kangawo Jeol who guided me in the right direction from the beginning till the end of this proposal and he has greatly contributed in making a difference in my performance.

Superficial thanks go to all Busitema University lecturers who guided us throughout this process.

I am also indebted to all my BPA classmates for the support that made my bachelor's program an enthralling Journey. May God grant vast blessings and propel each and every one of you to serve him in your entire life.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Meaning</b>
API	Application Programming Interface
e-Gov	Electronic Government
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LG	Local Government
MoICT	Ministry of ICT and National Guidance
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NITA-U	National Information Technology Authority – Uganda
PDLG	Pallisa District Local Government
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	Short Message Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UIA	Uganda Investment Authority
UICT	Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of digitalisation on citizen engagement in Pallisa District Local Government (PDLG), with a focus on three key constructs: digital infrastructure, digital value chain, and digital skills & competence. The objectives of the study were to assess the effect of digital infrastructure on citizen engagement, examine the effect of the digital value chain on citizen engagement, and establish the effect of digital skills and competence on citizen engagement. The study was anchored on the Task–Technology Fit (TTF) theory, which posits that technology is most effective when aligned with the tasks users need to perform. A cross-sectional research design was employed, and data were collected from 52 respondents using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that digital infrastructure, digital value chain, and digital skills & competence all had positive and significant effects on citizen engagement. Specifically, digital infrastructure was found to facilitate access and usability of e-governance platforms ( $r = 0.539, p < 0.01$ ), the digital value chain improved responsiveness and integration of service delivery systems ( $r = 0.712, p < 0.01$ ), and digital skills and competence enabled citizens to effectively utilize digital platforms for participation ( $r = 0.622, p < 0.01$ ). Regression analysis further indicated that these factors collectively explain a significant portion of the variation in citizen engagement, highlighting their predictive relevance. The study concluded that enhancing citizen engagement in PDLGs requires holistic investment in digital infrastructure, strengthening of digital value chain processes, and development of citizens' digital skills and competencies. Recommendations include expanding ICT infrastructure, integrating interoperable digital systems, and implementing digital literacy programs to foster inclusive, transparent, and responsive governance. The study contributes to the understanding of digitalisation as a driver of participatory local governance and provides practical guidance for policymakers seeking to improve citizen engagement in Ugandan district local governments.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, scope (content, geographical, and time), significance, conceptual framework, and key terms for the study

### 1.1 Background of the study

High-quality citizen engagement is the cornerstone of democratic governance, fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making in both the public and private sectors. Without meaningful engagement, institutions risk disconnecting from community needs, perpetuating exclusion, and eroding public trust (UNDP, 2023). Citizen engagement refers to the extent and quality of public involvement in governance processes, characterized by accessible participation channels, timely and constructive feedback mechanisms, and inclusive representation of diverse groups (Medaglia, 2022). Despite its critical role in promoting equitable development and responsive service delivery, a persistent gap exists between the ideals of citizen participation and their actual implementation, especially in many public sector contexts. In numerous developing countries, engagement efforts are hindered by limited digital infrastructure, weak civic education, unresponsive feedback systems, and underrepresentation of marginalized communities, including youth, women, and rural populations (Okello & Mbabazi, 2023). These challenges often result in superficial participation, policy disconnects, and diminished legitimacy of governance processes, undermining the core values of inclusive and responsive engagement (Baniamin & Halim, 2020a).

Globally, the OECD (2023) reports that only 34% of citizens across member countries trust their national governments, largely due to limited responsiveness and lack of meaningful public participation. In the European Union, the 2022 Eurobarometer Survey found that while 70% of citizens desired more say in public decisions, less than 25% felt their opinions were actually considered (European Commission, 2022). Similarly, in the United States, a Pew Research Center (2023) study revealed that only 17% of Americans trust the federal government to do what is right

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