

Enhancing Service Efficiency through Digital Transformation: Evidence from the Gambia Postal Services

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how digital transformation can enhance operational efficiency within the Gambia Postal Services, with a particular focus on the Gambia Postal Service Corporation (GAMPOST). Against the backdrop of rapid technological advancements and the global shift toward digital communication and e-commerce, traditional postal systems are under increasing pressure to modernize or risk obsolescence. The study is anchored on the premise that digital technologies—such as automation, electronic postal services, and integrated information systems—serve as critical drivers of institutional performance, service delivery, and competitiveness. Drawing on existing literature and empirical evidence, the research highlights how digital transformation improves process efficiency, reduces operational costs, enhances customer satisfaction, and enables service diversification within the postal sector. Using survey data and descriptive analysis, the findings reveal that GAMPOST has been slow in adopting digital solutions, resulting in significant inefficiencies in service delivery. A substantial majority of respondents (75%) indicated that electronic postal services are not adequately provided, while over 80% reported low levels of computer literacy among staff, posing a major barrier to digital adoption. Furthermore, more than 70% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with existing ICT policies, and over 90% agreed that technological advancements and the rise of the internet have negatively impacted traditional postal services due to the corporation's failure to adapt. The study concludes that digital transformation is essential for improving efficiency, ensuring financial sustainability, and enhancing competitiveness in the Gambian postal sector. It recommends increased investment in ICT infrastructure, staff capacity building, and supportive policy reforms to facilitate full digital integration, align with global trends, and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade or more, there has been increasing attention from both scholars and experts regarding the significant impact of technological advancements on organizational success. It is believed that technology has the potential to redefine the roles of professionals and, in some cases, render certain jobs obsolete. Moreover, it is anticipated that financial reports may either weaken or improve as executives implement new strategies to address the growing demand for technology and its profound impact on institutional performance within the business environment. Technology is no longer merely seen as a business enabler but as a key business driver. The continuous evolution of the internet, mobile technologies, and communication systems provides businesses with a broad range of opportunities. Today's information technology is being leveraged to enhance customer acquisition, drive automation, increase process efficiency, and deliver greater ease and competence to customers (Ankrah, 2015, p. 3).

Contemporary technological advancements have profound implications for a wide range of stakeholders, including individuals, businesses, governments, and entrepreneurs. These developments have fostered the emergence of new business models and entrepreneurial opportunities while also driving critical innovations in the accessibility, utilization, and transportation of goods and services for effective delivery to consumers. The transformative impact of technology extends across various sectors, reshaping industries and government operations through pioneering approaches, thereby significantly altering the ways in which users interact with and navigate the global landscape (Mathieu, Tremblay, & Lambert, 2011, p. 45). Similarly, Asher, Callan, and Marsh (2012, p. 18) highlight that the Internet and digital technology are revolutionizing communication and commerce worldwide. The rapid adoption of electronic alternatives to traditional mail services by both consumers and businesses is accelerating this transformation. Consequently, it has become crucial for postal services to modernize their operations in order to effectively adapt to the demands of the digital age. According to Buhler (2013, p. 21), mail operators are increasingly transitioning from traditional hard-copy

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distribution models to innovative digital platforms for advertising, communication, and transactions. This shift to digitalization offers an opportunity for the Gambia's postal service to enhance convenience, speed, and cost-effectiveness for the general public. The global postal sector is undergoing rapid transformation, as long-established business models are being challenged by modern technology and social media trends, creating unprecedented market changes. These developments signal a shift within the sector, with forward-thinking operators already exploring new business models. Despite the volatile corporate landscape, certain postal operators have managed to thrive. High-performing operators have primarily focused on diversification, expanding into new business areas that differ significantly from their traditional mail services to improve overall performance. Similarly, the postal services in The Gambia are working to transform their legacy mail networks into parcel networks, positioning themselves to capitalize on the growing e-commerce sector. While diversification has ensured the survival of postal operators, it remains uncertain whether traditional mail services will remain profitable in the future.

As the postal sector evolves, it has become a primary responsibility for the management of national postal services to diversify into financial services and fully automate their operations. This shift is essential for improving efficiency and adapting to the changing demands of the digital age. However, counter automation remains a significant concern for postal services, as it continues to expose vulnerabilities such as fraud and mismanagement of public funds, stemming from outdated manual operating processes. Additionally, many frontline staff members are older and lack the necessary computer literacy, further exacerbating the challenges faced in implementing effective digital solutions. The transition towards modernization, including full computerization, is critical for the sustainability and growth of postal services, especially in the face of increasing competition from digital alternatives (Ankrah, 2015, p. 5; Buhler, 2013, p. 22).

2. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Gambia Postal Service Corporation (GAMPOST) has experienced a significant decline in performance due to its failure to fully embrace digital transformation and modern technological advancements. Over the past decade, the volume of letter mail has steadily decreased, largely driven by the rise of faster, more efficient communication methods such as email, social media platforms, and smartphones (Asher, Callan, & Marsh, 2012, p. 20). This technological shift has rendered traditional postal services increasingly obsolete, leaving GAMPOST struggling to adapt to the changing landscape. As a result, the corporation has faced substantial revenue losses, which have adversely impacted its ability to modernize and enhance its service offerings.

Despite the growing importance of digital services in the global postal sector, GAMPOST has been slow to adopt Information and Communication Technology (ICT), hindering its ability to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market. Moreover, the lack of innovation and digital infrastructure has limited the organization's capacity to diversify its services and meet the demands of the modern consumer, particularly in the growing e-commerce sector (Mathieu, Tremblay, & Lambert, 2011, p. 50).

This research aims to examine the determinants of institutional performance at GAMPOST, with a focus on the role of digital transformation in driving organizational efficiency, financial viability, and competitiveness. The study will explore the barriers to technology adoption, the impact of digitalization on GAMPOST's operations, and the broader implications of these challenges on the corporation's sustainability and alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Buhler, 2013, p. 24).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design with hypothesis testing to examine how digital transformation enhances service efficiency at the Gambia Postal Services Corporation (GAMPOST) (Boswell & Cannon, 2014, p. 12). A mixed-method approach was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to capture both measurable outcomes and employee perspectives on digitalization and service delivery. Primary data were collected through structured Likert-scale questionnaires administered to GAMPOST employees, while secondary data were obtained from relevant academic and policy literature. A simple random sampling technique was used to ensure representativeness and minimize bias. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and content analysis for qualitative responses. The research instrument was pre-tested to ensure validity and reliability. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent, were strictly observed throughout the study.

4. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

4.1 Introduction

Digital transformation has emerged as a critical driver of organizational efficiency, competitiveness, and innovation in both private and public sectors. Over the past decade, scholars have emphasized the profound impact of technological advancements on business operations, organizational performance, and service delivery (Ankrah, 2015, p. 3). Technological integration enables organizations to automate routine processes, reduce operational costs, enhance service quality, and innovate new products (Mathieu, Tremblay, & Lambert, 2011, p. 45). In the postal sector, the transition from traditional mail to digital communication, logistics, and e-commerce services has become a necessity to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market (Asher, Callan, & Marsh, 2012, p. 18). For

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GAMPOST, digital transformation presents opportunities to enhance operational efficiency and develop innovative e-services. By leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT), automation, and strategic partnerships, postal services can improve the speed, accuracy, and reliability of their service delivery (Buhler, 2013, p. 21). However, this transformation requires careful alignment of technology with organizational strategy, infrastructure, and human capital.

4.2 Digital Transformation and Service Efficiency

Digital transformation involves integrating digital technologies into business processes to improve efficiency, productivity, and customer value (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014, p. 12). In the context of postal services, digitalization enhances operational workflows, reduces reliance on manual procedures, and creates opportunities for service diversification. High-performing postal operators globally have adopted digital platforms for parcel tracking, electronic communication, and financial services, resulting in improved service efficiency and customer satisfaction (Hess, Matt, Benlian, & Wiesböck, 2016, p. 125). Moreover, digital tools allow postal services to analyze operational data, streamline logistics, and optimize resource allocation (Rai, Pavlou, Im, & Du, 2012, p. 280). For GAMPOST, leveraging digital platforms can reduce delays in mail processing, enhance transparency, and support the introduction of innovative products such as e-commerce delivery services and mobile financial solutions.

4.3 Digital Transformation and Innovation in Postal Services

Innovation in postal services is increasingly driven by digitalization. According to Kane, Palmer, Phillips, Kiron, and Buckley (2015, p. 10), the adoption of digital technologies enables organizations to create new service offerings and respond effectively to changing customer demands. Postal operators are diversifying into e-services, logistics, and digital financial solutions to offset declining traditional mail volumes (Buhler, 2013, p. 22). Research indicates that collaboration with technology partners and stakeholder engagement are critical for fostering innovation. Schallmo, Williams, and Boardman (2017, p. 7) highlight that partnerships with logistics and IT providers enable postal services to co-develop digital products, improve operational efficiency, and reduce implementation risks. For GAMPOST, strategic alliances can facilitate the launch of new e-services, improve parcel and letter delivery, and strengthen its role in supporting the national digital economy.

4.4 Challenges to Digital Transformation in Postal Services

Despite the potential benefits, digital transformation in postal services faces several challenges. Resistance to change, inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited digital skills among staff, and outdated operational processes are significant barriers (Vial, 2019, p. 130). Melville (2010, p. 8) emphasizes that technological innovation alone is insufficient; organizations must also address human resource development, organizational culture, and governance structures to ensure effective digital adoption. In GAMPOST, these challenges are evident in the slow uptake of ICT solutions, limited staff digital literacy, and legacy systems that hinder automation and innovation (Mathieu, Tremblay, & Lambert, 2011, p. 50). Additionally, regulatory and policy frameworks, while supportive, require alignment with institutional strategies to fully enable digital service delivery (Kamau & Were, 2019, p. 60). Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure sustainable improvements in service efficiency and to unlock the benefits of digital transformation.

The literature indicates that digital transformation is a key enabler of service efficiency and innovation in postal services. ICT adoption, automation, and strategic partnerships enhance operational performance, customer satisfaction, and service diversification. However, successful transformation requires overcoming infrastructural, human resource, and policy-related challenges. For GAMPOST, embracing digitalization presents opportunities to modernize operations, introduce new e-services, and strengthen its role in the national digital economy.

5. FINDINGS

The study revealed that GAMPOST's adoption of electronic postal services remains limited. Table 1 shows that only 11 (15%) of respondents agree that GAMPOST provides electronic postal services, while 7 (10%) strongly disagree and 55 (75%) disagree. This indicates that the corporation has largely failed to embrace technological advancements to digitalize its products and services, contributing to inefficiencies and reduced competitiveness in the postal sector (Buhler, 2013, p. 22; Ankrah, 2015, p. 5). Regarding the influence of government ICT policies, 25% of respondents agree that the policies have enhanced postal sector performance, with 3 (4%) strongly agreeing. However, 3 (50%) disagree and 2 (3%) strongly disagree, suggesting that over 70% of employees perceive the ICT regulatory framework as inadequate in supporting GAMPOST's digital transformation (Mathieu, Tremblay, & Lambert, 2011, p. 48). This reflects the limited institutional support for modernization, which has hindered service innovation.

The findings also indicate that employee ICT competencies are low: only 9 (12.5%) agree that most employees are computer literate, while 4 (5%) strongly agree, and 51 (70%) disagree, with 9 (12.5%) strongly disagreeing. Over 80% of respondents concur that insufficient digital skills among staff are a major barrier to implementing new technologies, affecting operational efficiency and service delivery (Asher, Callan, & Marsh, 2012, p. 21; Melville, 2010, p. 8). The impact of technological advancement on postal services is further evidenced by responses regarding the internet and rapid technological emergence. Over 90% of respondents agree or strongly agree that GAMPOST has been negatively affected by the rise of digital alternatives and technological development, leading to a diminished market presence (Vial, 2019, p. 130; Rai, Pavlou, Im, & Du, 2012, p. 290).

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Finally, 49 (67%) of respondents agree that counter automation of products and services remains insufficient, with 3 (4%) strongly agreeing, 1 (1%) disagreeing, and 20 (28%) strongly disagreeing. Overall, 95% of respondents perceive GAMPOST as lagging in automation, contributing to inefficiencies in service delivery and affecting overall institutional performance (Hess, Matt, Benlian, & Wiesböck, 2016, p. 125; Schallmo, Williams, & Boardman, 2017, p. 5).

Table 1: Examination of how digital transformation increases efficiency on the GAMPOST		Frequency	Percent
Gampost provides electronic postal services	Agree	11	15
	Disagree	55	75
	Strongly disagree	7	10
	Total	73	100
The Gambia government's ICT policies and regulations have enhanced performance and productivity in the postal sector	Agree	18	25
	Disagree	50	68
	Strongly agree	3	4
	Strongly disagree	2	3
	Total	73	100
The majority of postal services employees are computer literate	Agree	9	12.5
	Disagree	51	70
	Strongly Agree	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	9	12.5
	Total	73	100
The birth of the internet has a negative effect on postal services	Agree	31	43
	Disagree	3	4
	Strongly Agree	37	50
	Strongly Disagree	2	3
	Total	73	100
Rapid technological emergence and development have greatly affected the postal sector	Agree	42	57
	Disagree	2	3
	Strongly Agree	27	37
	Strongly Disagree	2	3
	Total	73	100
The postal service is still lagging behind in counter automation of all its product and services	Agree	49	67
	Disagree	1	1
	Strongly Disagree	3	4
	Strongly Agree	20	28
	Total	73	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

6. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that GAMPOST faces significant challenges in leveraging digital transformation to enhance service efficiency. The corporation's limited adoption of electronic postal services, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and low digital literacy among employees have collectively contributed to service inefficiency and declining competitiveness (Buhler, 2013, p. 24; Ankrah, 2015, p. 6). Government ICT policies, while present, have not sufficiently supported GAMPOST's modernization, as perceived by the majority of employees (Mathieu, Tremblay, & Lambert, 2011, p. 50). Furthermore, the rapid rise of digital technologies and the internet has disrupted traditional postal operations, requiring urgent attention to digital transformation (Vial, 2019, p. 135; Rai, Pavlou, Im, & Du, 2012, p. 295). The study concludes that enhancing service efficiency at GAMPOST will require:

1. Investment in digital infrastructure to support automation and electronic postal services.
2. Capacity building and ICT training for employees to improve digital competencies.
3. Alignment with government ICT policies and proactive engagement with technology partners to foster innovation.
4. Strategic adoption of digital technologies to diversify services, especially in e-commerce and logistics.

Overall, digital transformation presents significant opportunities for GAMPOST to improve operational efficiency, service delivery, and competitiveness. However, realizing these benefits necessitates a coordinated approach involving investment, human capital development, and supportive policies (Kane, Palmer, Phillips, Kiron, & Buckley, 2015, p. 10; Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014, p. 45).

7. RECOMMENDATION

GAMPOST should strengthen digital transformation by investing in automated systems and integrated ICT platforms to streamline operations and reduce service delays. The organization should enhance employee digital competencies through continuous training to improve efficiency in service delivery. Additionally, adopting customer-focused e-services will improve accessibility, speed, and overall service quality.

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