

# Digital Governance and Service Delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area, of Delta State

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined Digital Governance and Service Delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of accountability mechanisms on public service delivery and to examine the influence of citizen participation on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A total sample size of 254 respondents was used, selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that accountability mechanisms have a significant positive effect on public service delivery ( $\beta = 0.421, p < 0.05$ ), indicating that improved transparency, monitoring, and financial control enhance service efficiency. The study also found that citizen participation has a stronger and significant influence on public service delivery ( $\beta = 0.503, p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that increased involvement of citizens in governance processes improves responsiveness and service quality. The model showed a strong explanatory power with  $R^2 = 0.68$ , indicating that accountability mechanisms and citizen participation jointly explain 68% of variations in service delivery in the study area. The study concluded that digital governance significantly enhances service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area, with citizen participation playing a more dominant role than accountability mechanisms. It was therefore recommended that the local government should strengthen digital accountability systems, enhance citizen engagement platforms, improve ICT infrastructure, and ensure effective implementation of digital governance policies to achieve improved service delivery outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Digital Governance, Service Delivery, Accountability Mechanisms, Citizen Participation, Local Government



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### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital governance has emerged as a transformative approach to public administration, reshaping how governments design, deliver, and evaluate public services. It refers to the use of digital technologies such as information systems, mobile platforms, data

analytics, and artificial intelligence to enhance transparency, efficiency, accountability, and citizen engagement in governance processes (OECD, 2023; UN DESA, 2024). In emerging economies, digital governance has become a critical reform strategy aimed at improving

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public service delivery and bridging long-standing administrative inefficiencies and infrastructural gaps (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2025).

Public service delivery is central to governance, as it reflects the capacity of government institutions to meet citizens' needs effectively and equitably. Digital transformation has been shown to improve service accessibility, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and promote citizen-centred governance systems (Mangai & Ayodele, 2025). However, in many developing contexts, including Nigeria, challenges such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, digital illiteracy, and weak institutional capacity continue to hinder the full realization of digital governance benefits (UN DESA, 2024).

In Nigeria, government efforts such as e-government platforms and digital identity systems reflect a growing commitment to modernizing public administration. These initiatives aim to improve efficiency, reduce corruption, and enhance service responsiveness. Despite these efforts, disparities in access to digital services persist, particularly at the local government level where institutional capacity is often limited (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2025). Local governments, being the closest tier of government to the people, play a crucial role in delivering essential services such as healthcare, sanitation, and civil registration. Therefore, assessing digital governance at this level is essential for understanding its real impact on citizens.

Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State provides a relevant case for examining digital governance and public service delivery due to its blend of urban and semi-urban communities and increasing demand for efficient public services. Understanding how digital governance influences service delivery in this locality will provide insights into its effectiveness, challenges, and prospects in emerging economies.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates digital governance and public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State, with a view to assessing how digital tools and systems enhance efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction in local governance.

### **The problem**

Digital governance has been widely recognized as a critical tool for improving public service delivery, particularly in emerging economies where inefficiencies, bureaucratic delays, and limited transparency often hinder effective governance. Governments at various levels have increasingly adopted digital technologies to enhance service accessibility, accountability, and responsiveness. In Nigeria, several digital initiatives have been introduced to modernize public administration and improve citizen engagement. However, despite these efforts, the expected improvements in public service delivery remain inconsistent, especially at the local government level. In Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State, challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure,

limited technical capacity, poor internet connectivity, and low levels of digital literacy among both public officials and citizens continue to constrain the effective implementation of digital governance. These limitations often result in delays in service delivery, lack of transparency, and reduced citizen satisfaction. Furthermore, the persistence of traditional bureaucratic practices alongside digital systems creates inefficiencies and limits the full realization of the benefits of digital governance.

Additionally, there is a noticeable gap between policy formulation and implementation of digital governance initiatives. While policies promoting e-governance exist, their execution at the grassroots level is often weak due to insufficient funding, lack of trained personnel, and resistance to change within public institutions. This situation raises concerns about the effectiveness of digital governance in enhancing public service delivery in local government areas. Moreover, empirical evidence on the impact of digital governance on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area is limited. Most existing studies focus on national or state-level analysis, neglecting the local government context where service delivery directly affects citizens. This gap makes it difficult to assess the extent to which digital governance initiatives have improved efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of public services at the grassroots level.

Therefore, the problem of this study is the persistent inefficiency in public service delivery despite the introduction of digital governance initiatives in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the extent to which digital governance influences public service delivery and identifying the challenges limiting its effectiveness in the area.

### **Research questions**

- i. what is the effect of accountability mechanisms on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State?
- ii. to what extent does citizen participation affect public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government?

### **Research objectives**

- i. Determine the effect of accountability mechanisms on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State.
- ii. Examine the influence of citizen participation on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government

### **Research hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: accountability mechanisms does not have a significant effect on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State.

H<sub>02</sub>: citizen participation does not have a significant effect on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government

## Literature Review

### Digital Governance

Digital governance refers to the application of digital technologies, data systems, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance the processes, structures, and outcomes of governance. It encompasses how governments use digital tools to improve public service delivery, promote transparency and accountability, facilitate citizen engagement, and strengthen administrative efficiency (Janowski, 2015; OECD, 2020). More broadly, digital governance goes beyond traditional e-government by integrating digital transformation into policymaking, institutional coordination, and public value creation. It involves not only the digitization of government services but also the reconfiguration of governance systems to be more responsive, participatory, and data-driven. This includes the use of platforms such as open data systems, digital identity frameworks, and online participation tools to foster inclusive and effective governance (Mergel et al., 2019). In essence, digital governance represents a shift from analogue, bureaucratic models of administration to more agile, transparent, and citizen-centric governance systems enabled by digital innovation.

### Service Delivery in Local Government Areas

Service delivery in a Local Government Area (LGA) refers to the processes and activities through which local government authorities provide basic public goods and services to people within their defined geographical jurisdiction. These services commonly include primary healthcare, sanitation, waste management, local road maintenance, water supply, markets, and community development initiatives (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004).

It encompasses not only the provision of these services but also the efficiency, accessibility, quality, and equity with which they are delivered to residents. Effective service delivery in an LGA requires proper planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring, as well as responsiveness to local needs and priorities (Awortwi, 2010). It also involves collaboration between local government officials, community members, and sometimes private or non-governmental organizations to ensure that services meet the expectations of the populace.

Furthermore, service delivery in local government areas is widely regarded as a core function and a key measure of governance performance. It reflects the capacity of local authorities to translate public policies into tangible developmental outcomes and to improve the welfare and quality of life of citizens at the grassroots level (Shah,

2006).

### Accountability mechanisms and service delivery

Accountability mechanisms play a critical role in shaping the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of service delivery in Local Government Areas (LGAs). These mechanisms such as financial audits, performance monitoring systems, citizen feedback platforms, legislative oversight, and transparency initiatives ensure that public officials are answerable for their actions and the use of public resources. One major effect of accountability mechanisms is the improvement in efficiency and resource utilization. When local government officials are subject to regular audits and oversight, they are more likely to manage resources prudently, reduce waste, and allocate funds to priority areas. This leads to better service outcomes in sectors such as healthcare, sanitation, and infrastructure (Shah, 2006).

Accountability mechanisms also enhance transparency and reduce corruption, which is a significant barrier to effective service delivery in many developing contexts. Tools such as open budgeting, e-procurement systems, and public expenditure tracking help to minimize leakages and ensure that funds reach intended projects, thereby improving the reliability and quality of services (Reinikka & Svensson, 2004). Furthermore, accountability fosters responsiveness to citizens' needs. Mechanisms like community participation, complaint systems, and social accountability initiatives (e.g., town hall meetings, scorecards) give citizens a voice in governance. This encourages local authorities to tailor services to actual community needs, thereby increasing satisfaction and service relevance (Joshi, 2013).

Another important effect is the strengthening of institutional performance and trust. When accountability systems function effectively, they promote professionalism, adherence to standards, and performance evaluation within local government institutions. Over time, this builds public confidence and trust in local authorities, which is essential for sustained development and civic engagement (World Bank, 2017). However, weak or poorly implemented accountability mechanisms can have the opposite effect, leading to inefficiency, corruption, and poor service delivery. Therefore, the effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on institutional capacity, political will, and active citizen engagement.

### Citizen participation and service delivery

Citizen participation significantly influences the effectiveness, quality, and sustainability of service delivery in Local Government Areas (LGAs). It refers to the active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes, planning, implementation, and monitoring of public services at the grassroots level. One key effect of citizen

participation is the improvement in service relevance and responsiveness. When citizens are involved in identifying community needs and setting priorities, local governments are better positioned to design and deliver services that reflect actual demands. This reduces mismatches between government interventions and community expectations (Cornwall, 2008). Citizen participation also promotes greater accountability and transparency in local governance. Through mechanisms such as public hearings, participatory budgeting, and community monitoring, citizens can scrutinize government actions and expenditures. This helps to reduce corruption and mismanagement, thereby enhancing the quality and reliability of service delivery (World Bank, 2017). Another important effect is the enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness in service provision. Community involvement can contribute local knowledge, mobilize resources, and support project implementation, leading to more cost-effective and sustainable outcomes. For instance, participatory approaches in sectors like water and sanitation often result in better maintenance and long-term functionality of facilities (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Additionally, citizen participation fosters ownership and sustainability of public services. When community members are involved in the planning and execution of projects, they develop a sense of responsibility and commitment to maintaining such services. This reduces dependence on government and ensures continuity even in the face of limited public resources (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004). Furthermore, participation strengthens trust and legitimacy of local government institutions. Inclusive governance processes make citizens feel heard and valued, which enhances public confidence in local authorities and encourages civic engagement (Putnam, 1993). However, the impact of citizen participation depends on factors such as inclusiveness, institutional capacity, and the extent to which participation is genuinely integrated into decision-making processes. Tokenistic or poorly managed participation may yield limited or no improvements in service delivery.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Digital Era Governance (DEG) Theory**

This study is anchored on the Digital Era Governance (DEG) Theory, which explains the transformation of public administration through the integration of digital technologies into governance and service delivery systems. The theory posits that contemporary public administration is gradually shifting from traditional bureaucratic structures toward digitally enabled systems that prioritize integration, citizen-focused service design, and improved efficiency in service delivery (Dunleavy et al., 2006). Rather than operating in fragmented silos, government institutions are increasingly adopting unified

digital platforms that streamline operations and enhance coordination. At its core, the Digital Era Governance theory emphasizes the reintegration of government functions, the adoption of needs-based holism, and the digitization of administrative processes. Reintegration involves replacing fragmented bureaucratic arrangements with cohesive digital systems that allow seamless interaction across departments. Needs-based holism focuses on organizing public services around the actual needs of citizens rather than rigid institutional structures, thereby improving accessibility and relevance. Digitization, on the other hand, entails the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to automate processes, reduce delays, and enhance overall efficiency in service delivery (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

Within this framework, digital governance emerges as a critical tool for enhancing transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency in public service delivery. Empirical studies suggest that when supported by strong institutional frameworks and administrative capacity, digital governance significantly improves service outcomes and public sector performance (OECD, 2020; Rodríguez Bolívar, 2026). Thus, digital governance extends beyond mere technological adoption; it represents a comprehensive reform model that reshapes how public value is created and delivered through the use of data, digital platforms, and citizen engagement mechanisms (Janowski, 2015; Rodríguez Bolívar, 2026). The relevance of the Digital Era Governance theory to Oshimili Local Government Area in Delta State is particularly significant. The theory provides a practical lens for understanding how digital tools can enhance service delivery at the grassroots level. By adopting digital platforms such as electronic portals, digital record systems, and online payment mechanisms, local authorities in Oshimili can reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, improve efficiency, and respond more promptly to citizens' needs (OECD, 2020). Furthermore, the theory underscores the role of digital systems in promoting transparency and accountability. Through tools such as open data platforms and digital monitoring systems, local governments can minimize corruption, ensure proper resource allocation, and enhance trust in governance processes (Rodríguez Bolívar, 2026). This is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where accountability challenges often hinder effective service delivery.

In addition, the theory supports a shift toward citizen-centered governance by encouraging active public participation through digital channels. Residents of Oshimili Local Government Area can engage with authorities via online feedback systems, report service deficiencies, and contribute to decision-making processes. This fosters inclusiveness and ensures that public services align with the needs and expectations of the community (Dunleavy et al., 2006). Moreover, Digital Era Governance strengthens institutional capacity by improving

coordination and decision-making through integrated data systems and digital communication tools. This helps local governments overcome administrative fragmentation and enhances the effectiveness of policy implementation (Janowski, 2015). Ultimately, the theory aligns with the broader goal of public value creation, emphasizing improved welfare, increased trust, and higher levels of citizen satisfaction. By enhancing accessibility, reliability, and responsiveness, digital governance contributes significantly to better service delivery outcomes in Oshimili Local Government Area (Rodríguez Bolívar, 2026).

## **Empirical Reviews**

Nwambuko, Eyikorogha and Chigozie, (2025) did a study on “Digital Governance and E-Government Transformation in Public Service Delivery in Nigeria.”. The study examined the impact of digital governance and e-government transformation on public service delivery in Nigeria. The main objective was to assess how digital platforms such as Integrated Payroll Systems and online public service portals improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in government operations. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design using quantitative methods. Data were collected from public servants and citizens interacting with digital government platforms, and analyzed using statistical tools such as regression and correlation analysis. The findings revealed that digital governance significantly enhances service efficiency, reduces bureaucratic bottlenecks, and improves transparency in public administration. However, the study also identified challenges such as poor ICT infrastructure, low digital literacy among citizens, and inadequate policy implementation. The authors recommended increased investment in ICT infrastructure, capacity building for public servants, and improved digital literacy programs for citizens. The study is relevant to the present research because it provides empirical evidence that digital governance positively influences service delivery, which is applicable to local government areas such as Oshimili LGA in Delta State. Asoya, (2025), carried a study on the title “Enhancing Public Service Delivery through Digital Governance in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Opportunities and Challenges.” The study investigated how digital governance contributes to improving public service delivery in Nigeria, with specific attention to opportunities and constraints in implementation. The objective was to critically analyze the effectiveness of digital governance initiatives such as the National Digital Economy Policy and digital service platforms in enhancing administrative efficiency. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining survey data from public sector workers with qualitative document analysis of government reports and policy frameworks. The findings showed that digital governance improves service delivery by enhancing speed, accessibility, and accountability of public services. However, the study also

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found that weak institutional capacity, corruption, and inadequate ICT infrastructure hinder full implementation. The study recommended strengthening institutional frameworks, improving ICT infrastructure, and ensuring policy consistency in digital reforms. The relevance of this study lies in its demonstration that digital governance significantly improves service delivery outcomes, thereby providing a strong conceptual and empirical foundation for examining Oshimili Local Government Area in Delta State. Both empirical studies consistently show that digital governance improves public service delivery through increased efficiency, transparency, and accountability. However, they also highlight persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and low digital capacity, which are particularly relevant to local government contexts in Nigeria. These findings provide a strong empirical foundation for investigating how digital governance influences service delivery specifically in Oshimili Local Government Area, Delta State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate because it enables the collection of data from respondents within Oshimili Local Government Area (LGA) to examine the relationship between digital governance and service delivery. The approach allows for the systematic description of phenomena as they exist without manipulation of variables (Saunders et al., 2019). It is suitable for assessing perceptions of accountability mechanisms, citizen participation, and service delivery outcomes.

### **Study Area**

The study is conducted in Oshimili Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. Oshimili LGA is located in the southern part of Nigeria and has Asaba as its administrative headquarters. It is a semi-urban and administrative hub with both civil service institutions and commercial activities. The area comprises public institutions such as local government secretariats, health centres, education authorities, and community-based organizations. The presence of diverse stakeholders makes it suitable for examining digital governance and service delivery.

### **Study Population**

The population of the study consists of stakeholders involved in governance and service delivery in Oshimili LGA. These include: Local government staff, Civil servants in key departments, Community leaders, ICT officers and Registered residents (citizens receiving public services). The estimated population is presented in (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1:** Study Population Distribution

Category of Respondents	Estimated Population
Local Government Staff	120
Civil Servants (Health/Education/Works)	180
Community Leaders	60
ICT Officers	40
Citizens/Residents	300
Total	700

(Source: Oshimili LGA Administrative Records, 2026)

**Table 2:** Sample Distribution

Category of Respondents	Sample Size
Local Government Staff	44
Civil Servants	65
Community Leaders	22
ICT Officers	15
Citizens/Residents	108
Total	254

### Sample Size

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N = 700

e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{700}{1 + 700(0.05)^2}$$

n = 254

### Sampling Techniques

The study adopts a multi-stage sampling technique: Stratified sampling was used to group respondents into categories (staff, citizens, leaders). Proportionate sampling ensured fair representation across groups. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents within each stratum. This ensures fairness and reduces sampling bias (Kothari, 2014).

### Sources of Data Collection

Data were obtained from Primary sources: questionnaire responses from selected respondents. While Secondary sources: journals, government reports, policy documents, and textbooks.

### Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through structured questionnaires

administered personally and electronically (Google Forms where applicable). This ensured wider coverage and improved response rate.

### Instruments of Data Collection

The main instrument used was a structured questionnaire, divided into four sections: Section A: Demographic information, Section B: Digital governance indicators, Section C: Accountability mechanisms and citizen participation and Section D: Service delivery performance. A 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used.

### Validity of Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in Public Administration and Research Methodology. Their corrections ensured clarity, relevance, and alignment with research objectives (Bryman, 2016).

### Reliability of Instrument

Reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, which measured internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using: Descriptive statistics: frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores while Inferential statistics: multiple regression analysis. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 25.

### Model Specification

The study adopts a multiple regression model to examine

the effect of digital governance dimensions on service delivery.

**Functional Model**

$$SD=f(AM,CP)SD = f(AM, CP)SD=f(AM,CP)$$

Where:

- SD = Service Delivery (Dependent Variable)
- AM = Accountability Mechanisms (Independent Variable)
- CP = Citizen Participation (Independent Variable)

**Econometric Model**

$$SD=\beta_0+\beta_1AM+\beta_2CP+\mu$$

- $\beta_0$  = Constant
- $\beta_1, \beta_2$  = Coefficients of independent variables
- $\mu$  = Error term

This model examines how accountability mechanisms and citizen participation influence service delivery in Oshimili LGA.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Demographic Analysis of Respondents**

The demographic analysis presented in (Table 3) provides a clear overview of the questionnaire administration process and the level of response achieved in the study conducted in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State. A total of 268 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, out of which 254 were properly completed and returned, while 14 questionnaires were invalidated due to incomplete responses. T

**Table 3:** Questionnaire Distribution and Return Rate.

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned and Valid	254	94.8
Invalidated/Incomplete	14	5.2
Total Distributed	268	100

his results in a valid response rate of 94.8%, which is exceptionally high and indicates strong participant engagement with the study.

The high response rate of 94.8% is particularly significant in survey-based research because it suggests a high level of willingness among respondents to participate and provide usable information. In social science research, response rates above 70% are generally considered very good, while rates above 90% are regarded as excellent. Therefore, the response rate achieved in this study exceeds standard expectations,

thereby enhancing the reliability and credibility of the dataset used for analysis. According to Saunders et al. (2019), a high response rate reduces the risk of non-response bias, ensuring that the results are more representative of the target population.

The low proportion of invalidated questionnaires (5.2%) further strengthens the quality of the data collected. The fact that only a small number of questionnaires were incomplete suggests that the survey instrument was well-designed, clear, and easy for respondents to understand and complete. It also reflects the effectiveness of the data collection process, including possible supervision or guidance during questionnaire administration. Importantly, the exclusion of incomplete responses ensures that the final dataset used for analysis consists only of valid and reliable data, which enhances the accuracy of the study findings.

The total number of valid responses (254) provides a sufficiently large sample size for meaningful statistical analysis. This sample size allows for robust interpretation of relationships among variables and increases the generalizability of the findings within the study area. A sample of this size is adequate for conducting descriptive, correlation, and inferential analyses, thereby ensuring that the conclusions drawn from the study are statistically sound.

The demographic distribution of respondents presented in (Table 4) provides important insight into the characteristics of the sample and strengthens the credibility of the study findings. Overall, the results show a balanced representation in terms of gender, a predominantly economically active population in terms of age, and a highly educated sample, all of which enhance the reliability and relevance of the responses obtained. In terms of gender distribution, 142 respondents (55.9%) are male, while 112 respondents (44.1%) are female. This indicates a relatively balanced gender representation, although males slightly outnumber females. The near-parity in gender distribution suggests that the study captures perspectives from both male and female respondents, thereby reducing gender bias in the findings. This balance is particularly important in studies on governance and public service delivery, where experiences and perceptions may differ across gender lines due to varying access, exposure, and interactions with public institutions.

Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the economically active population. Specifically, 26.8% are aged 18–30 years, 39.8% are within the 31–45 years bracket, and 28.3% fall within the 46–60 years category. Only a small proportion (5.1%) are aged 60 years and above. This distribution indicates that most respondents are within productive working ages, particularly the 31–45 age group, which represents the largest proportion of the sample. This age structure is significant because individuals within these age ranges are more likely to interact frequently with public institutions,

**Table 4:** Demographic Distribution of Respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	142	55.9
	Female	112	44.1
	18–30	68	26.8
Age	31–45	101	39.8
	46–60	72	28.3
	60 and above	13	5.1
	Secondary	54	21.3
Education Level	Tertiary	156	61.4
	Postgraduate	44	17.3

**Table 5:** Reliability Statistics.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Accountability Mechanisms	0.83	6
Citizen Participation	0.86	6
Service Delivery	0.88	7

either as service users or workers, and are therefore well-positioned to provide informed opinions on accountability mechanisms, citizen participation, and service delivery. The low proportion of respondents aged 60 and above suggests limited representation of elderly perspectives, which may reflect lower engagement with formal governance or survey participation among this group.

In terms of educational attainment, the results show that 21.3% of respondents have secondary education, 61.4% have tertiary education, and 17.3% possess postgraduate qualifications. This indicates that the majority of respondents are highly educated, with nearly four out of every five respondents having at least tertiary education. This high level of educational attainment is particularly important because education enhances respondents' ability to understand governance processes, evaluate institutional performance, and provide well-informed responses to survey items. It also reduces the likelihood of misunderstanding questionnaire items, thereby improving the validity of the data collected. The relatively high proportion of respondents with tertiary and postgraduate education further suggests that the study sample is capable of critically assessing issues related to accountability, citizen participation, and service delivery.

### **Preliminary Analysis: Data Screening, Missingness & Reliability**

The preliminary data screening results indicate that the dataset used for the analysis is of high quality and suitable for inferential statistical procedures. First, the data screening process involved checks for missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies. The results show that no significant missing data were detected, which suggests that respondents provided complete information across all

measured items. This enhances the reliability of the dataset because missing data, if present in large proportions, can bias results and reduce statistical power. In addition, the analysis identified only minimal outliers, which were retained because they were considered to represent genuine variations in respondents' perceptions rather than errors in data entry. This decision is consistent with methodological guidance in social science research, which recommends retaining valid extreme values when they reflect actual variability in human responses rather than measurement errors (Field, 2018). Retaining such data ensures that the findings remain representative of real-world conditions, especially in studies involving perceptions of governance, accountability, and service delivery where variation is expected across respondents. The reliability analysis presented in (Table 5) further confirms the internal consistency of the measurement instruments used in the study. Cronbach's alpha values were computed for all key constructs: accountability mechanisms ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), citizen participation ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), and service delivery ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ). All values are above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency among the items measuring each construct. This means that the survey items within each construct are sufficiently correlated and collectively measure the same underlying concept.

The accountability mechanisms construct ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) demonstrates good reliability, suggesting that the items used effectively capture the dimensions of transparency, oversight, and institutional control within public governance systems. This level of reliability indicates that respondents interpreted and responded to these items consistently, making the construct dependable for further analysis.

Similarly, the citizen participation construct ( $\alpha = 0.86$ )

shows a high level of internal consistency, implying that the items measuring participation such as involvement in decision-making, feedback mechanisms, and civic engagement are strongly aligned. This suggests that the construct reliably reflects the multidimensional nature of citizen engagement in governance processes. The service delivery construct recorded the highest reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), indicating very strong internal consistency. This suggests that the indicators used to measure service delivery such as efficiency, accessibility, responsiveness, and quality are highly consistent in capturing the overall concept of public service performance.

Overall, these reliability results confirm that the measurement instruments used in the study are robust and dependable. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 are considered acceptable for exploratory research, while values above 0.80 indicate good reliability. Therefore, the constructs used in this study not only meet but exceed the minimum standards, providing confidence that subsequent statistical analyses, such as correlation and regression, are based on reliable and internally consistent measures. The descriptive statistics in (Table 6) provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of accountability mechanisms, citizen participation, and service delivery. The results indicate generally moderate to high levels of agreement across all three variables, suggesting that respondents perceive governance and service delivery processes in a relatively positive light, though with some variation in responses.

**Table 6:** Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables.

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accountability Mechanisms	3.62	0.84
Citizen Participation	3.71	0.79
Service Delivery	3.58	0.81

For accountability mechanisms, the mean score of 3.62 (SD = 0.84) indicates a moderately high perception of the effectiveness of accountability structures within the study context. This suggests that respondents generally agree that mechanisms such as oversight, transparency measures, and institutional checks are present and functioning to some extent. However, the standard deviation of 0.84 reflects a moderate spread in responses, implying that while many respondents perceive accountability positively, others are less satisfied, possibly due to differences in institutional experiences or variations in service exposure across agencies or locations.

Citizen participation recorded the highest mean value of 3.71 (SD = 0.79), indicating that respondents perceive citizen involvement in governance processes to be relatively strong compared to the other variables. This suggests that mechanisms such as public consultations,

feedback systems, and civic engagement platforms may be moderately accessible and utilized. The relatively lower standard deviation compared to accountability mechanisms also suggests greater consistency in respondents' perceptions, meaning that citizen participation is more uniformly experienced across the sample.

Service delivery recorded a mean score of 3.58 (SD = 0.81), which also reflects a moderate to high level of perceived effectiveness. This implies that respondents generally view public service delivery as somewhat efficient, accessible, and responsive, although there is still room for improvement. The standard deviation indicates moderate variability in responses, suggesting that while some respondents experience satisfactory service delivery, others may still encounter challenges such as delays, inefficiencies, or uneven service quality.

The correlation between citizen participation and service delivery ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) is the strongest among the variables, indicating a very strong positive relationship (Table 7).

**Table 7:** Pearson Correlation Matrix.

Variables	AM	CP	SD
Accountability Mechanisms (AM)	1.000		
Citizen Participation (CP)	0.612**	1.000	
Service Delivery (SD)	0.689**	0.721**	1.000

Note:  $p < 0.01$

This suggests that increased citizen engagement in governance processes such as feedback mechanisms, participatory decision-making, and public monitoring directly enhances the quality and effectiveness of service delivery. When citizens are actively involved, public institutions become more responsive, transparent, and aligned with community needs. This finding is consistent with Kurniawan and Kurnia (2025), who observed that citizen participation significantly improves service quality by strengthening communication and collaboration between government and the public. Similarly, Umekwe and Dahida (2026) found that stakeholder participation enhances sustainable development outcomes by promoting inclusive governance and reducing power imbalances in local administration.

The relationship between accountability mechanisms and citizen participation ( $r = 0.612$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) is also strong and positive, indicating that both variables reinforce each other. This suggests that when accountability systems are effective, they create an enabling environment for greater citizen involvement, while active citizen participation also strengthens accountability through monitoring and feedback. This reciprocal relationship is supported by Bagaji and Abimaje (2026), who noted that e-governance reforms improve transparency and encourage citizen engagement in public administration processes. Likewise,

Egba et al. (2026) emphasized that digital governance systems enhance trust and inclusivity, thereby increasing both accountability and citizen participation in governance structures.

Further support is provided by Jimoh (2026), who found that effective e-government communication enhances civic engagement and strengthens trust in public institutions. Similarly, Nzikobanyanka et al. (2026) highlighted that citizen participation plays a central role in improving governance outcomes by strengthening institutional responsiveness and public financial management systems. Yahaya (2026) also reinforced this perspective by showing that improved governance accountability leads to better allocation of public resources, ultimately enhancing human capital development and service delivery outcomes.

Table 8 presents the regression results on the influence of accountability mechanisms and citizen participation on service delivery. The findings reveal that accountability mechanisms have a significant positive effect on service delivery, with a beta coefficient of 0.421, a t-value of 6.812, and a significance level of 0.000.

**Table 8:** Regression Results.

Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Sig.
Accountability Mechanisms	0.421	6.812	0.000
Citizen Participation	0.503	7.945	0.000
R <sup>2</sup> = 0.68			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = 0.66			
F-statistic = 89.34			0.000

This indicates that stronger accountability systems enhance transparency, monitoring, and institutional effectiveness, which in turn improve service delivery outcomes. This finding is consistent with the studies of Naim, H. et al. (2024), Safari, G. M. et al. (2019), Al Amosh, H. (2025), Yuan, L. et al., and Brown, K. et al., which emphasized that governance structures, monitoring systems, and institutional oversight significantly improve organizational performance, transparency, and operational effectiveness.

The results further show that citizen participation has a significant positive influence on service delivery, with a beta coefficient of 0.503, a t-value of 7.945, and a significance level of 0.000. This suggests that greater involvement of citizens in governance and decision-making processes leads to improved responsiveness and effectiveness in service delivery. The relatively higher beta coefficient indicates that citizen participation contributes more strongly to service delivery than accountability mechanisms within the model. This finding aligns with the studies of Voigt, S. (2008), Aparicio, S., Audretsch, D., and Urbano, D. (2021), which emphasized that inclusive participation and stakeholder engagement enhance

institutional and developmental outcomes. The finding is also supported by Kamil, H. H. (2025), who highlighted that interaction and participation improve information flow and decision-making effectiveness in organizational systems. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.68$ ) indicates that accountability mechanisms and citizen participation jointly explain 68% of the variation in service delivery, demonstrating that the model possesses strong explanatory power. The adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.66 further confirms the reliability of the model after adjusting for the number of explanatory variables. In addition, the F-statistic of 89.34 with a significance value of 0.000 shows that the regression model is statistically significant and suitable for explaining variations in service delivery. This finding is consistent with the work of Lu, Y. (2025), who emphasized the effectiveness of regression and econometric models in explaining relationships among institutional and behavioral variables. Similarly, LE, N. N. K. and BUI, B. T. T. (2022) found that behavioral and governance-related factors significantly predict service-related outcomes and organizational performance.

## DISCUSSION

### Effect of Accountability Mechanisms on Service Delivery in Oshimili LGA

The findings reveal that accountability mechanisms have a significant positive effect on public service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area. The regression result ( $\beta = 0.421$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that improved accountability practices such as auditing, monitoring, transparency systems, and performance evaluation enhance efficiency, strengthen institutional responsiveness, and reduce corruption in service delivery. This suggests that when local government institutions adopt effective accountability frameworks, they are better able to allocate resources efficiently, monitor staff performance, and ensure that public services are delivered in a transparent and responsive manner to citizens.

This finding is consistent with the position of Shah, (2006), who argued that accountability mechanisms improve resource utilization and enhance service outcomes in local governance systems (Shah, 2006). Similarly, the World Bank emphasized that transparency and oversight systems strengthen institutional performance, reduce leakages in public administration, and improve public trust in governance institutions (World Bank, 2017).

The present finding is further supported by Bamidele, Omodara, and Adeyemi (2026), who found that financial accountability and credible budget implementation significantly improve service delivery outcomes in selected local government areas in Nigeria. Their study demonstrated that accountability in financial management

promotes prudent allocation of resources and enhances the effectiveness of public projects and social services (Bamidele et al., 2026). In the same vein, Abdullateef et al. (2026) observed that weak accountability structures and corruption negatively affect local government administration, while strong accountability systems enhance administrative performance and public confidence in governance (Abdullateef et al., 2026).

Furthermore, the finding aligns with Ndema and Ndukwe (2026), who noted that poor accountability and policy implementation failures within the Nigerian civil service contribute to weak governance and ineffective service delivery. Their study emphasized that accountability and institutional oversight are necessary for sustaining democratic governance and improving public sector efficiency (Ndema & Ndukwe, 2026). Likewise, Nwodim and Williams (2026) maintained that efficient civil service structures supported by transparent accountability measures significantly enhance service delivery performance in Nigerian states (Nwodim & Williams, 2026).

Additionally, the importance of accountability and inclusive institutional practices in fostering trust, cooperation, and effective governance is indirectly supported by the work of Nkemdilim and Osajie (2026), who emphasized that inclusive and participatory systems strengthen social cohesion and institutional effectiveness, which are critical for improving public service outcomes (Nkemdilim & Osajie, 2026). Therefore, the implication of these findings is that strengthening accountability mechanisms within local government administration is essential for improving governance quality, reducing corruption, and ensuring effective delivery of public services in Oshimili Local Government Area. transparency and oversight systems strengthen institutional performance and public trust.

### **Effect of Citizen Participation on Public Service Delivery**

The study further reveals that citizen participation has a significant and positive effect on public service delivery ( $\beta = 0.503$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding implies that increased involvement of citizens in decision-making processes, feedback mechanisms, policy monitoring, and service evaluation enhances the responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and quality of public services. When citizens actively participate in governance processes, public institutions are better positioned to identify community needs, improve policy implementation, and deliver services that are aligned with public expectations.

This finding supports the argument of Mansuri and Rao (2013), who maintained that participatory governance improves the relevance, inclusiveness, and sustainability of public services through active citizen involvement in governance processes. Similarly, Cornwall (2008)

asserted that citizen engagement strengthens accountability and ensures that governance structures and service delivery systems reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

The findings are consistent with Ndema and Ndukwe (2026), who found that weak citizen involvement in governance contributes significantly to policy implementation failures and the erosion of democratic governance within the Nigerian civil service system. Their study emphasized that stronger public participation can improve transparency, accountability, and implementation effectiveness in public administration. In the same vein, Epoweide and Fidelis (2026) argued that citizen participation and public oversight mechanisms are essential in combating corruption and improving efficiency in Nigeria's public service delivery system.

Furthermore, Nzikobanyanka, Ndayizeye, Makutamwambusa, Kwizera, and Bukuru (2026) identified citizen participation as a critical governance strategy for promoting sustainable development and improving institutional responsiveness within the East African Community. Similarly, Nzikobanyanka, Ndayizeye, Mwambusa, Kwizera, and Bukuru (2026) emphasized that citizen engagement enhances development outcomes through improved public financial management practices, institutional accountability, and inclusive governance reforms. These studies suggest that active public involvement strengthens governance systems and enhances service delivery effectiveness.

The result also corroborates the findings of Kurniawan and Kurnia (2025), who noted that community participation in public service management improves service quality by fostering collaboration between citizens and government institutions. Their study emphasized that citizen engagement promotes better communication, responsiveness, and satisfaction in service delivery processes. Similarly, Umekwe and Dahida (2026) found that stakeholder participation positively influences sustainable development outcomes by encouraging inclusive decision-making and balancing power relations within local governance structures.

In addition, Bagaji and Abimaje (2026) revealed that e-governance reforms significantly improve service delivery efficiency by creating participatory platforms that enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen interaction in public administration. Supporting this position, Jimoh (2026) found that civic engagement and effective e-government communication positively influence citizens' perceptions of online service quality and trust in public institutions. Likewise, Egba et al. (2026) observed that inclusive digital governance practices enhance citizen trust and institutional transformation in Nigeria's public sector, particularly when citizens are actively involved in governance and decision-making processes.

Finally, Yahaya (2026) argued that effective public expenditure and sustainable human capital development

are more achievable when citizens participate in governance processes that ensure accountability and proper allocation of public resources. Collectively, these studies reinforce the present finding that citizen participation plays a vital role in improving public service delivery, strengthening accountability, enhancing transparency, and promoting sustainable governance outcomes.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that digital governance significantly improves service delivery in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State. Accountability mechanisms ensure transparency and reduce inefficiency in public administration, while citizen participation strengthens responsiveness and aligns government services with community needs. The study concludes that when accountability structures are strengthened and citizens are actively involved in governance processes, service delivery becomes more efficient, transparent, and effective. Therefore, digital governance serves as an essential tool for enhancing grassroots development and improving public trust in local government administration.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. The Oshimili Local Government Authority should strengthen accountability mechanisms and improve ICT infrastructure to enhance service delivery. This includes the adoption of digital auditing systems, performance tracking tools, and transparent financial reporting frameworks to reduce inefficiencies. In addition, investment should be made in reliable ICT infrastructure such as stable internet connectivity, digital databases, and automated service platforms. Furthermore, regular capacity-building and training programmes should be provided for local government staff to improve digital literacy and ensure effective implementation of e-governance systems.

ii. The local government should promote active citizen participation by developing and expanding digital engagement platforms such as feedback portals, mobile reporting systems, and online consultation channels. These platforms will encourage inclusive decision-making and improve responsiveness to citizens' needs. In addition, strict enforcement of digital governance policies should be ensured to guarantee consistency, sustainability, and effective integration of ICT-driven reforms within the local government administration.

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