



## E-Government and Public Administration: Navigating through the Public Administration Paradigm of Governance to make sense of E-Governance

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### **Abstract**

This study is premised on the seventh paradigm of Public Administration as Governance. The field of Public Administration has undergone tremendous changes over the past decades. The New Public Management (NPM) and the recent Governance paradigms came in a time whereby e-Government was starting to gain momentum within the context of Public Administration. Considering the Information Age, it can be contested that the introduction of e-Government and e-Governance with the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has forced governments across the globe to transition from traditional methods of governance to modern methods of governance and that of delivering public services. Today, governments are characterised by e-Government and e-Governance putting pressure on the traditional government system to transition into digital government system. Therefore, the ability to survive in the modern society, e-Governance and public administration ought to incorporate the technological way of governance, implying that e-Governance becomes the new paradigm of Public Administration. With aid of qualitative research methodology, this study reviews literature from scholarly journal articles, academic books, trusted academic databases and websites to establish solid arguments and thereby generating empirical knowledge on whether or not e-Governance should be considered a new paradigm in Public Administration. Amongst others, the findings reveal consistent evidence of a paradigm shift towards e-Governance, while simultaneously there is also the absence of a complete shift towards e-Governance as the new paradigm of Public Administration. The study concludes that, it still remains unclear as whether or not the paradigmatic shift towards e-Governance is to be considered an empirical claim or a normative proclamation. Therefore, scholars need to provide more empirical evidence that can be systematically analysed and approved to support e-Governance as paradigm.

**Keywords:** *Public Administration; Public Administration; E-Government; E-Governance; Paradigm; Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); New Public Management (NPM)*

## Introduction

In Public Administration, the emergence and debate on e-Government stresses issues of data, management, Information Communication and Technology (ICT) to improve service delivery (Malodi, Dhir, Mishra & Bhatti, 2021). Therefore, there is an urgent need for a broad understanding of e-Government and public administration so that both Public Administration and e-Government practitioners can escape from overdependence on theory to information management ideology that seeks to transition public administration into a dominance state of e-Government affairs (Carter, Yoon & Liu, 2022). If the academic community fails to enrich e-Government within the context of Public Administration, both benefits and possibilities of e-Government will remain unused, unexplored and unexploited (Upadhyay, Kumar, Dwivedi & Adlakha, 2022). Moreover, if e-Government is only used for the sole purpose of information management, this may tend to endanger the legitimacy and foundations of public administration in a sense that Public Administration scholars and public managers may only dream of a radically new system of government without actually achieving such a system in reality (Cater et al., 2022; Upadhyay et al., 2022; Malodia et al., 2021).

Information management alone cannot guarantee a radical and new government system (Upadhyay et al., 2022). Information management may help produce policy proposals, but it would take active public managers, Public Administration scholars and governments to process change and build organisations that become efficient and effective in executing public affairs (Alawneh, Al-Refai & Batiha, 2013).

Today, e-Government has managed to stimulate noticeable administrative reform supporting the New Public Management (NPM) reforms worldwide (Mukonza, 2014). After the introduction of e-Commerce and e-Business in the private sector, governments across the globe began to study and notice the efficiency of business operations taking place, and at some point, the governments had to adopt and adapt into the new millennium, hence the introduction e-Government in the early 1990s (Mukonza, 2014). Government realised the importance of the internet of things, and that to survive in the modern society online governments would simplify life and the manner of accessing public services (Alawneh et al., 2013).

With e-Government trends being studied across the globe and supported by conferences indicating which nations are considered the best in e-Government implementations, such indications or indicators are important to note (Zhang, Lin & Shan, 2023). Nevertheless, e-Government studies seem to be dominantly emanating from Europe, United States of America, and Asia particularly from the Information Technology (IT) field and not necessarily from the field and practice of public administration (Sharma & Mishra, 2017). One of the less contributory continent seems to be the African continent with less research focusing on e-Government and Public Administration and its effect on governments and public service delivery (Sharma & Mishra, 2017). From this standing point of view, e-Government is mostly understood from the IT perspective and partly misunderstood from the Public Administration perspective, hence, the less research focus for various Public Administration scholars not only in Africa, but across the global research community (Sharma & Mishra, 2017). To make sense of both e-Governance and Public Administration perspectives, the following research questions need to be answered:

- Should e-Governance be considered as a New Public Administration paradigm?
- What does e-Government and e-Governance mean in the context of Public Administration?
- What is the status quo of e-Governance on Public Administration?
- What are the challenges emanating from e-Government in the context of public administration?

Having established the main thrust of this study, e-Government is one of the most important aspects of public administration as it involves the government and the way services are rendered through

the application of the ICTs. In the past, public administration was known to wholly focus on the government and its administrative functions with less consideration of providing online services. Today, it is impossible to consider government without being characterised by e-Government services and e-Governance. This is crucial to grasp as this study shed light on the adopted research methodology, a distinction between e-Government and e-Governance, trends of e-Government services, challenges of e-Governance, and establishes a paradigmatic analysis of whether or not e-Governance should be considered a new paradigm in Public Administration.

### ***Research Methodology***

In building empirical analysis and scrutinizing convincing arguments on e-Governance as a new paradigmatic transformation in Public Administration, this study adopted the qualitative research method, with the aid of secondary sources to examine old and new doctrines based on the paradigm of Public Administration as Governance in the current age of digitalization of public services (Mayring, 2010). In analysing and examining literature on e-Government and e-Governance within the context of Public Administration, a qualitative content analysis was employed (Mayrin, 2010). Qualitative content was captured and evaluated through the use of qualitative content segments. This study presents secondary data obtained from scholarly journal articles, academic books, trusted academic databases and websites. This helped the researcher to gain and present new empirical evidence and analysis in order to establish whether or not e-Governance is to be considered a new paradigm in Public Administration (Mayrin, 2010). The findings presented in this study are not exhaustive, meaning further research studies, conference proceedings, institutional gatherings and seminars ought to be held in order to establish their findings and conclusions on the matter in question.

### ***Literature Review***

#### **Defining E-Government and E-Governance in the Context of Public Administration**

There seem to be an existing clash within the academic community. Some scholars claim that e-Government was introduced in the 1970s in a form of e-Commerce in order to expedite business efficiency and effectiveness to provide services to clients, while some attest that it was well established in the 1990s in government to offer online services (Pinacho, Cruz & Valencia, 2020). However, the fact of the manner is that e-Government and e-Governance has emerged as one of the administrative reforms in Public Administration and Management (Suing, Barrazueta & Carpio, 2018). E-Government refers to the adoption, application and the use of ICTs in the public sector as a novel way to establish links between governments, administration, businesses and the general public to achieve a responsive, transparent, effective, efficient, collaborative and integrated government system to allow people to reap the benefits of online services (Loza, 2020).

In most case e-Government and e-Governance are often used interchangeably, however, the two concepts are distinct and they both have different meanings (Loza, 2020). To establish a clear distinction, e-Government has to do with the adoption, implementation and use of ICTs in government, while e-Governance is concerned with the overall governance processes (Suing et al., 2018). Again, e-Government focuses on the delivery of services through the use of ICTs, while e-Governance focuses on the efficient and effective management of resources allocated to the delivery of such services (Pinacho et al., 2020). Primarily, e-Government's goal is to use ICTs to establish government-citizen interaction, while e-Governance primarily deals with the wider aspects on governing the government-citizen interaction through the use of ICTs (Malodia et al., 2021). E-Government emphasis on the improvement of government efficiency and transparency, while e-Governance aims to promote and enhance the

responsiveness and effectiveness of governance through the use of technological innovation (Mukonza, 2014).

Basically, e-Government involves the digitalization of government services, documents and process, while e-Governance involves the use of ICTs for policy designs, formulation and decision-making (Sharma & Mishra, 2017). For instance, e-Government comprises online portals for government services, while e-Governance comprises digital platforms for communication and citizen participation and collaboration (Adnan, Ghazali & Othman, 2022). To cement both concepts in the context of Public Administration, e-Government offers online access to government data, information and services, while e-Governance promotes e-participation (online citizen engagement) in public policy making and decision-making (Molobela, 2023). E-Government implement technological advancements to automate government operations and focuses on transactional interaction between citizens and government, while e-Governance uses the implemented technological advancements to foster participatory and inclusive governance (Molobela, 2023). Although, there's no universal definition of both concepts, e-Government is key in enhancing public accountability through the requirement of digital record-keeping, while e-Governance increases and enhances public trust in the government through public accountability and transparency of e-Government (Adnan et al., 2022). Therefore, to fully understand the trends on e-Government and e-Governance in Public Administration, the next section seeks to locate current implementation and use of both concepts across the world.

### **Trends on E-Government and E-Governance within the Context of Public Administration**

Understanding the global positioning of e-Government is fundamental in considering the urgency of maintaining the integrity of Public Administration in the modern society (Bizimana, 2020:7). The ranking of e-Government has taken a rise in the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa. ICT's usage, online service index, digital public services, connectivity, telecommunication infrastructure index, and digital skills have comparatively shown the complete transition from traditional public administration into a data and information public administration (Bizimana, 2020:7). To trace the progress of e-Government within the context of Public Administration and whether or not countries are connecting the dots between e-Government and Public Administration, it is crucial to look at the progress made in Europe, China, India, and Africa as follows:

#### **Europe**

The European Commission has over the past years taken concrete actions to design, develop, and implement cross-border digital public services also known e-Government services (European Commission, 2023). Today, Europe has a high significant interest and commitment in providing a wide variety of benefits such as increased e-transparency, greater e-participation of the citizenry in politics and government affairs (European Commission, 2023). The European Digital Identity (EUDI) wallet aims to ease travelling within Europe, improve access to health facilities, efficient banking, and education (European Commission, 2023). The EUDI seeks to revolutionise the lives of citizens and businesses to digitally identify and access public and private services within Europe. Europe also encourages the use of smartphones by providing secure and convenient connection to allow the public to control personal data when accessing public services.

#### **China**

Over the past decades China has managed to transition into the second largest economy with a population of (+/-) 1.35 billion (Warf, 2017:41). E-Government in China is highly considered and treated with significant interest by both the private and public sectors. The country is fuelled by influx of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) making the economy to be the world's biggest producer of electronics, steel,

cement, toys, textile, mobile phones, and multiple products (Warf, 2017:41). Today China is the most digitalised nation with technologies and telecommunications being the utmost integral part of the government. The Chinese government views ICTs as the most essential tool to enhance productivity and national competitiveness. Although China managed to score e-readiness at 0.5359 which is higher than other countries, e-participation remain very low with 0.2105 suggesting that the ability of the citizens to participate in government affairs may be suppressed partly due to oppression, lack of human rights, corruption, and mostly because of the socialism system (Warf, 2017:41).

## **India**

Annapoorna (2021) argues that the concept of e-Government and e-Governance is presumably new. In 1987, India launched the National Satellite-Based Computer Network (NICENET) alongside the District Information System of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) programme (Annapoorna, 2021). Both the network and programme were launched with the ultimate aim to digitize all district services whereby the government offered free hardware and software to improve the requisite impetus for e-Governance. Furthermore, in 2006, the Department of Electronics and Information Technology, and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievance formulated the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) which aimed at providing access to all government services to all citizens in order to foster transparency, efficiency and reliability (Annapoorna, 2021). In 2015, the government transitioned into a 'Digital India' through developing a stable and secure digital infrastructure; delivering services digitally; and most importantly achieving a universal digital literacy (Annapoorna, 2021).

## **Africa**

African countries over the past years have shown intensifying efforts to utilise ICT tools to enable and transform government's service delivery (United Nations, 2022). In this sense, governments across the African continent are progressively adopting the digital and e-Government operational mechanisms to improve e-services. There is a noticeable progress of governments making use of ICT tools such as internet-based applications and digital technologies to enhance accessibility and the delivery of basic services to the citizenry. The utilisation of ICT tools continues to boost participation of the public in relation but not limited to e-voting (although some countries like South Africa have recently rejected the call for e-voting), e-visa, e-filing, e-banking, e-procurement, e-passports (applying for passports), e-ID/smart ID (identity documents), bookings of drivers' licenses, and many more while promoting e-democracy (Molobela, 2023). Additionally, the African Union High-Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET) highly supports the call to digitize government services, countries such as South Africa, Lesotho, Nigeria, Cameroon, Rwanda, Congo and Togo are considerably far ahead with e-Government to enhance service delivery (United Nations, 2022). It is worth noting that, constraints and various limitations such as uncoordinated and fractured communication amongst government departments and countries have restricted the simplicity of accessing data and information, and crucial documents. As a result, this affects efficient e-Governance, e-transparency, and e-accountability. Fiscal imbalance and limited budgets on ICT consequently restricts the progress of e-Government. Apart from this challenges, South Africa, Mauritius, Tunisia and Ghana have enabled various government services to be accessible online (United Nations, 2022).

## **Challenges emanating from E-Government and E-Governance in the Context of Public Administration**

Despite the successful adoption and implementation of e-Government in the Western and African countries, there seem to be serious obstacles and challenges towards e-Government and e-Governance (Molobela, 2023; Cater et al., 2022; Upadhyay et al., 2022). Africa (including South Africa) in particular is recorded to have experienced multiple challenges even to this day (Muridzi, Meyer & Masengu, 2021). The most common challenges include but not limited to digital divide; poor political



leadership and strategic vision; resistance to change; inadequate access to ICT infrastructure; unstable internet access; issues of privacy and security (Muridzi, 2019).

- **Digital Divide**

There seem to be a global problem regarding the digital divide, despite the massive strides made towards ICT infrastructural development (Marion, Pariso & Picariello, 2023:205). Multiple communities still encounter challenges in accessing valuable data and information to control their businesses and daily lives. Some countries including South Africa are confronted with less efficient e-Government services, which contribute to a lower digital and technological response causing high risks and delays in the adoption of e-Government services (Molobela, 2023). The paradoxical problems adds on the existing ICT gap instead of allowing public administration to reap the benefits of a digital government and explore greater efficiency of e-Government (Marion et al., 2023: 205). In support of the existing paradoxical issues, Pontones-Rosa, Pérez-Morote and Santos-Penalver (2021:1) aver that digital inclusion is not guaranteed amongst all groups, while the use of ICT is partly adequate and satisfactory. In addition, accessibility, usage and satisfaction with ICT infrastructural development alone do not seem to be sufficient to claim complete interconnectedness between e-Government and public administration.

- **Poor Political Leadership and Strategic Vision**

Poor political will and lack of strategic direction in government is one of the major obstacles towards the success of digitalizing government services in South Africa and some African countries (Muridzi, 2019). Without commitment to policy formulation and execution of e-Government projects fuelled by both the political will and strategic direction, the South Africa government would not survive in the current digital world (Bizimana, 2020:6; Muridzi, 2019). Political office bearers ought to display political confidence and trust towards e-Government projects (Nven-akeng & Sirajul, 2013).

- **Resistance to Change**

One of the biggest challenges hindering the complete adoption and implementation of e-Government services is said to be resistance to change within government (Nven-akeng & Sirajul, 2013). The current government in South Africa and other African countries continues to encounter a serious clash between Public Administration traditionalists and the Postmodern Public Administration specialists (Nkomo & Moyane, 2021). The clash causes an impediment of the digitalization projects of government services (Upadhyay et al., 2022). The traditionalists often perceive e-Government and e-Governance as a disruptive factor, while the postmodern specialists perceive it as the most advanced way to reduce bureaucratic procedures and offer collaboration and solutions in an efficient and effective manner towards government services (Malodia et al., 2021). Resistance to change may also cause government employees and political office bearers to disrupt e-Government implementation (Muridzi, 2019).

- **Inadequate Access to ICT Infrastructure**

E-Government and e-Governance requires the use of ICTs and access to the internet to allow people to use digital platforms and access online services (Molobela, 2023). Inadequate access to ICT infrastructure made available by the government carries negative effects on how society perceive e-Government and the legitimacy of e-Governance. Inadequate access to ICT infrastructure may contribute to instability of the government-citizen relationship, interaction and communication (Molobela, 2023). The instability of the internet access may delay the digitalization of government services. Lack of public wifi/internet terminals and computers at public libraries, schools, and various government departments is a major problem towards e-Governance reforms in South Africa and other African countries (Nkomo & Moyane, 2021).

**• Privacy and Security**

There seem to be less regulatory frameworks designed to protect personal data and information for several users of e-Government services (Muridzi et al., 2021). Issues of privacy and security cannot be maintained through a policy only, actions against illegal access to personal data and information by unauthorised persons must be taken to discourage any continuation of using personal data and information to facilitate illegal activities (Muridzi et al., 2021). Some online service, such as payments of municipal bills requires online banking system to be linked with municipal accounts, this often threatens some customers to facilitate payments due to fear of lack of privacy and security offered by e-Government systems (Nkomo & Moyane, 2021).

There are numerous challenges that can be noted, however, the abovementioned ones were found to be common and causing a major concern for various e-Government users. This implies that e-Government is still confronted with various challenges that must be addressed and solved before it can gain complete public trust.

**Theoretical Framework: Making sense of E-Governance as a Public Administration Paradigm**

Public Administration comprises multiple paradigms. The first paradigm focused on “The Politics/Administration Dichotomy (1990-1926); the second paradigm was on “The Principles of Public Administration (1927-1937); the third paradigm focused on “Public Administration as Political Science (1950-1970); the fourth paradigm was on “Public Administration as Administrative Science (1956-1970); while the fifth paradigm focused on “Public Administration as Public Administration (1970-present); the sixth paradigm was on “Public Administration as New Public Management (1991-present); the seventh paradigm was on “Public Administration as Governance (1995-present). Paradigm 1 to 5 can be read in a book titled “Public Administration and Public Affairs” published by Nicholas Henry in 1975. While paradigm 6 and 7 were later added to accommodate new developments in relation to Public Administration to New Public Management, which gave rise to Public Administration to Governance (Mukonza, 2014:503).

This study is premised on the seventh paradigm of Public Administration as Governance. The field of Public Administration has undergone multiples changes over the past decades. This can be noted through the abovementioned paradigms. The New Public Management and the recent Governance paradigms came in a time whereby e-Government was starting to gain momentum within the context of Public Administration. Considering the Information Age, it can be contested that the introduction of e-Government with the application of ICTs has forced governments across the globe to transition from old ways to modern ways of providing public services through online systems. Today, governments are characterised by e-Government and e-Governance rather than the old and usual traditional government system. Therefore, the ability to survive in the modern society, e-Government and public administration ought to incorporate the technological ways of governance, implying that e-Governance becomes the new paradigms of Public Administration.

The seventh paradigm of Public Administration as Governance indicates that the New Public Management (NPM) is concerned with the way government aims to achieve its objectives in order to become more efficient and economical in delivering goods and services to the public. This is done in liberal environment comprising individuals’ preferences superseded by collective preferences (Minogue, Palidano & Hulme, 1998:4). According to Paterson and Mafunisa (2005:540) the NPM is commonly known or referred to as a paradigm, a reform programme, a movement and an industry that came with multiple reforms including but not limited to deregulation, privatisation, and the re-conceptualisation of the traditional role of government into an efficient, economic and business environment (Frederickson, 2005:112; Louw, 2012:93). According to Louw (2012:88) there has been a paradigm shift from the NPM to Governance with governments across the globe launching major public sector reforms including but

not limited to ‘e-Government’. This suggests that in order for P(p)ublic A(a)ministration to survive both as a field of study and practice, traditional Public Administration ought to shift into the current Governance era dominated by the replete data and information economies rather than the depleting industrial economies.

According to Bovaird and Loffer (2003:9) the concept of governance carries its roots from the private sector indicating that it is associated with the concept of corporate governance. Corporate governance is linked to elements of decision-making and control of private entities (Bovaird & Loffer, 2003:9). On other hand, Thornhill (2006:803) is on an opinion that ‘governance’ was captured within the field of Public Administration in the early 1980s, hence it failed to gain much momentum back then. In the past years, the governance paradigm was known as a movement and practice employed to help perceive the government as the driving force of society capable of bringing both citizens and the private sector together so as to shape the dynamics of governance and public administration (Mukonza, 2014:506). Minogue et al. cited in Mukonza (2014) asserted that governance must comprise four element namely (1) legitimacy, meaning governments ought to operate with consent of the governed; (2) accountability, meaning there must available mechanisms and systems dedicated to ensure public accountability of public officials and politicians for their actions and decisions taken; (3) competence of the government in policy execution; meaning governments must employ and appoint competent staff qualified and skilled in executing public policy; and (4) respect and dignity for the law and protection of human rights, meaning the government must ensure that the laws are not compromised at the expense of the public. Both Misuraca (2007) and Maserumule (2011) warns the academic communities that ‘governance’ can bring about the bad and the good depending on the context of resource allocation in order to respond to collective issues or the lack thereof. Misuraca (2007:13) further argues that good governance must comprise accountability, transparency, rule of law, participation, effectiveness and strategic vision.

*“In an attempt to shift from Public Administration as Governance, can we claim a new paradigm: Public Administration as e-Governance?”*

In an attempt to make sense of e-Governance in the context of Public Administration paradigms, this study argues that e-Governance can be approached from various dimensions.

The substantial works of Molobela (2023) supporting the argument made by Chadwick (2006) provides that the emergence of e-Government and e-Governance has brought about new ways of delivering public services in an efficient and effective manner. Mukonza (2014:508) points out that issues of efficiency and effectiveness mainly forms part of the NPM paradigm. The NPM advocates for the theme of effectiveness and efficiency within government suggesting that e-Government tools such as ICTs can be used to achieve government’s objectives. Moreover, it is also crucial that the use of ICTs comes different folds in a sense that objectives can be met, and the government can use ICTs to govern, to provide online services, and to connect and communicate with various stakeholders in society.

The use of ICTs as one of the tools of e-Governance has entrenched Public Administration to an extent of introducing other additional concepts including but not limited to; e-administration, e-participation, e-democracy, e-voting, e-learning, e-filling, e-municipality, and e-procurement. Misuraca (2007:9) long acknowledged that ICTs in government plays a crucial role in entrenching democratic practices in the contemporary society. In this view, the rapid disperse of data and information allows governments, businesses and the public to reap the benefits of e-Government as a major development in public administration. Good governance is promoted and enhanced through ICTs as it offers the governments and their citizens’ opportunities to connect, commit, and communicate with one another on public affairs. Moreover, ICTs if used correctly can enhance transparency, accountability, and offer access to citizen-centered services. In the context of Public Administration paradigms, e-Governance also fits into the paradigm of ‘Public Administration as Government’. However, this study contend that the



New Public Management and Governance are linked to e-Governance as primary paradigms, and not necessarily for e-Governance to claim itself as a single paradigm of Public Administration. However, the researcher affirms that indeed e-Governance has caused a major paradigm shift in the field.

The tremendous works of Henry (1975), Thornhill (2006), and Louw (2012) advises Public Administration scholars that Public Administration as a discipline is dynamic while being static. This is due to the emergence of new direction since the early 1980s because of political and administration changes and responses to the demands, expectations and needs of the modern society. Indeed there has been a paradigm shift in Public Administration because of difficulties affecting the manner in which governments use to function, hence the need for adopting and implementing e-Government services. Although, e-Governance has not yet received much momentum as a Public Administration paradigm, it is important to note that a paradigm occurs when there are discrepancies that appear to affect the functioning of the current paradigms implying that they can no longer function properly (Louw, 2012:90). In this case, the traditional government and the traditional public administration can no longer function properly without the adoption and implementation of e-Government services. Therefore, could this implies the need for e-Governance as a new paradigm in Public Administration? The following findings attempt to answer this question.

### ***Findings and Discussions***

The profound works of Islam and Ehsan (2015) reveals e-Governance as a paradigm shift within Public Administration. In their arguments, e-Governance offers a new way and method of governance in all aspects of public administration as it brings massive changes in government structure, roles and responsibilities, and the latter processes of public service delivery (Islam & Ehsan, 2015). The effect of e-Government suggests a paradigm shift in Public Administration, as it has proved to have brought about government transformation in the system capable of achieving effective decision-making and public policy processes, interaction, engagement, and streamlining government, businesses and citizens relations to access services online beyond normal working hours in government (Molobela, 2023). Again, Mukonza (2014:509) had also concluded that e-Governance is a new paradigm of Public Administration. However, little empirical evidence and systematic analysis can be found particularly within the realities of how governments have managed to improve e-Governance. The majority of citizens still have no access to e-Government services, hence, this continues to marginalise and disadvantages such communities and leaving them out in participating in decision-making of public policies that tend to control and regulate their daily lives and the economy.

Snellen and Thaens (2008:1) long reported that e-Government is already a new paradigm in Public Administration, as some parts of the world are currently planning to move from e-Government to a mobile government since the penetration of smartphones is dominant in society, and that the availability of databases can be accessed via smartphones allowing for the simplicity of access government services online. Hammerschmid, Palaric, Rackwitz and Wegrich (2023) also reveals that there has been a paradigmatic shift caused by the use of ICTs as a form of governance to transform the pre-existing “Traditional Weberian Public Administration and the New Public Management”. In reality, Hammerschmid et al. (2023) further reveals that e-Governance as a paradigm remain relatively unexplored by Public Administration scholars, but also affirms that e-Governance is emerging as the most dominant paradigm to digitalize government services.

It is evident that there is a call for e-Governance to be labelled as a “New Paradigm in Public Administration”, but then again, there is also an empirical gap that need to be filled by empirical analysis and evidence to support and substantiate the call and assertion to initiate a paradigm shift (Moynihan, 2008; Lodge & Gill, 2011; Elston, MacCarthaigh & Verhoest, 2018). Lodge and Gill (2011) further

argued that e-Governance as a paradigm could be perceived a myth of the Post-New Public Management. In contrast to this myth, Margetts and Dunleavy (2013) further reported that the toolkit for the public sector reforms have encountered a shift from NPM signifying the fragmentation of the public management reforms towards the need for the digital governance in order to improve and reintegrate public services, which allows the government to implement and execute digital administrative functions. In simple terms, Margetts and Dunleavy (2013) argues that governments are already in the second wave of digital-era governance as a quasi-paradigm for government.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Based on the evidence and arguments presented in this study, it still remains unclear as whether or not the paradigmatic shift towards e-Governance is to be considered an empirical claim or a normative proclamation signifying a Public Administration call to affirm to a prescriptive call to establish e-Governance a permanent paradigm given the progress of the digital world. The main thrust of this paper was to scrutinize and establish whether or not e-Governance might have caused a paradigm shift in Public Administration in which government policies and public services ought to be re-engineered and co-steered alongside the private sector and the citizenry. Therefore, this study recommend that to ascertain e-Governance as a complete paradigm of Public Administration, systematic evidence and empirical analysis, more frequent collaborations with multiple stakeholders, scholars, institutions of higher learning businesses and the general public in all parts of the global community must take place in order to review and amend most recent digital plans and strategies and further affirm and declare worldwide whether or not e-Governance deserves to added as one of the New Paradigm of Public Administration. A clear-cut distinction or public declaration of this would mean a new vision for all sectors of governments including South Africa to completely transition from administrative traditions and reintroduce reform trajectories in order to build a stronger and competitive economies and reinforce some digital policies to ensure efficient and effective public service delivery.

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