International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

Leveraging E-Government Infrastructure for Entrepreneurship Development and Economic Growth in Rural Communities: Addressing Challenges and Opportunities in South Africa

Authors:

Annastasia Noko Moloto
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract:

This study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with entrepreneurship development in rural South African communities, focusing on the role of e-government infrastructure in promoting economic growth and addressing poverty and unemployment. It centers on Ga-Mothiba in Limpopo Province, a rural area facing limited access to vital services such as healthcare, education, and telecommunications—factors that contribute to high unemployment rates and the migration of residents to urban areas in search of better opportunities. The study also identifies restricted access to market information and limited government support as significant barriers to the economic participation of rural populations, while agriculture, the dominant livelihood in these areas, is declining due to reduced global demand and productivity challenges. Using a descriptive case study design within a quantitative research framework, the study distributed 108 closed-ended questionnaires to general residents and community leaders through purposive sampling, with 90 successfully completed and analysed using SPSS Version 25. The findings emphasize the need to expand e-government services in rural regions as a means to close the digital divide, enhance socio-economic inclusion, and enable access to essential public services. The research highlights that through strategic and inclusive policy implementation aligned with Batho Pele principles, e-government can empower rural youth, boost entrepreneurship, and contribute meaningfully to national development goals and sustainable rural advancement.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship Development, E-Government, Rural Communities, Economic Growth, Poverty Alleviation

Submitted: 2025-07-11. Revised: 2025-07-21. Accepted: 2025-08-15.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

Introduction

Rural communities in South Africa continue to face profound developmental challenges that hinder sustainable economic growth and perpetuate high levels of poverty and unemployment. These areas often lack critical infrastructure and access to essential services, including quality healthcare, education, and telecommunications (Lombo & Subban, 2024). Such deficiencies contribute to systemic socio-economic exclusion and limit opportunities for upward mobility. Moreover, agriculture, which serves as the primary livelihood for many rural residents, has become increasingly vulnerable due to declining global demand and reduced productivity (Güreşçi, 2022). These factors have led to economic instability, prompting a steady migration from rural to urban areas in search of improved living conditions and employment opportunities

Infrastructural deficits, rural communities frequently experience limited access to current market information, digital technology, and government services (Seretse, Chukwuere, Lubbe & Klopper, 2018). These limitations significantly constrain entrepreneurial activities, leaving substantial potential for local economic development unrealized (Kosasih & Sulaiman, 2024). However, the emergence of e-government infrastructure presents a promising avenue for addressing these constraints. By leveraging digital platforms, e-government can facilitate access to public services, provide crucial information, and create new opportunities for business development in rural areas.

Despite notable progress in the implementation of e-government initiatives in urban centers, rural areas in South Africa remain marginalised in terms of technological access and digital service delivery. This persistent digital divide not only exacerbates socio-economic inequalities but also inhibits the ability of rural populations to participate fully in the national economy (Chari, 2024). Barriers such as unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient digital literacy, and a lack of user-friendly government interfaces further impede the successful adoption of e-government services in rural settings (Omweri, 2024). Moreover, the ongoing challenges within the agricultural sector including fluctuating market prices and environmental stressors compound economic vulnerability and reinforce cycles of poverty (Das et al., 2020).

In light of these challenges, this study seeks to explore the role of e-government infrastructure in fostering entrepreneurship and promoting economic growth in South Africa's rural communities. Specifically, the research focuses on the Ga-Mothiba rural area in Limpopo Province, employing a quantitative approach through the administration of closed-ended questionnaires to local community members. The study aims to critically examine both the opportunities and limitations associated with the use of e-government platforms to support entrepreneurial activity, particularly in addressing unemployment and poverty. Ultimately, this research highlights the transformative potential of digital

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

governance in narrowing the rural-urban divide, promoting inclusive development, and empowering marginalised populations to become active contributors to the national economy.

Literature Review

The following section offers a brief overview of the concepts of e-government and entrepreneurship, followed by a thorough review of existing literature on the challenges of rural digital inclusion and prior research related to digital infrastructure and economic participation. This is complemented by the presentation of the study's theoretical framework. The paper then outlines the research methodology, presents the key findings, engages in critical discussion, and concludes with policy recommendations aimed at enhancing rural development through digital governance.

TAM as a Theoretical Foundation

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), explains technology adoption based on perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), both of which shape users' attitudes and intentions toward using technology. This model is particularly applicable to understanding e-government adoption in rural South Africa, where both access to and perceptions of digital platforms are influenced by infrastructure, affordability, and digital literacy. Studies like those by AlAwadhi and Morris (2009) and Obeidat and AbuShanab (2010) have demonstrated that PU and PEOU are critical in determining e-government adoption, especially in developing regions. In rural South Africa, e-government's perceived usefulness relates to its potential to enhance access to information, reduce bureaucratic burdens, and support entrepreneurship. However, adoption is hindered by systemic barriers such as poor connectivity, high internet costs, and limited ICT skills, as noted by Mawela et al. (2017) and Mpinganjira (2013). While TAM provides a foundational understanding of user behavior, its limitations in addressing contextual and structural challenges necessitate an expanded application, which this study aims to provide by situating TAM within the specific realities of rural South African communities.

E-Government as a Tool for Entrepreneurship Development

In South Africa, urban regions enjoy the benefits of e-government services due to advanced ICT infrastructure, whereas rural areas encounter considerable obstacles (Mkhomazi & Iyamu, 2011). With 33.14% of the population residing in rural locales, restricted access to ICT impedes essential services such as healthcare, education, and governmental information. This digital disparity has resulted in protests and dissatisfaction stemming from insufficient service delivery (Mkhomazi & Iyamu, 2011; Noruwana, 2015). E-government systems promote innovation ecosystems by enabling collaboration among government entities, research institutions, and entrepreneurs (Noruwana, 2015). These systems grant access to open data, public funding, and digital platforms, empowering entrepreneurs to create

new products and services, particularly in emerging sectors like e-commerce, digital technologies, and FinTech. This collaborative atmosphere fosters entrepreneurship and generates new market opportunities. Nations that adopt effective e-government systems cultivate more conducive environments for entrepreneurship by streamlining regulatory processes, lowering administrative expenses, and improving transparency (Al-Ansi, Garad, Jaboob & Al-Ansi, 2024).

As noted by Das and Das (2022), businesses in such settings benefit from expedited e-government services, which subsequently invigorates entrepreneurial activity. Nevertheless, for e-government to comprehensively bolster entrepreneurship, governments must tackle the requisite technical, human, and policy infrastructure, as highlighted by Obeidat and AbuShanab (2010). Furthermore, a significant link between entrepreneurship and e-government is found in the innovation role. Governments should function as incubators of innovation to facilitate the growth of new enterprises (Abu-Shanab & Osmani, 2019). By embracing this role, governments can assist emerging entrepreneurs and promote the establishment of new ventures.

Challenges of Rural Digital Inclusion

Rawahi, Coombs, and Doherty (2016) emphasise that the effective execution of e-government is contingent upon several crucial elements, such as efficient communication, high-quality information, well-defined policy goals, and strong governance. Nevertheless, the notion of 'readiness' as a strategic issue within the African context remains insufficiently explored (Aichholzer, 2004; Heeks, 2002). Although considerable focus has been directed towards the challenges of e-government, the issue of digital inclusion in rural areas presents a unique array of difficulties. Rural communities often encounter significant gaps in infrastructure, including unreliable or entirely absent broadband services, which critically hampers their access to vital digital resources (Heeks & Bailur, 2007). Bahia, Castells, Cruz, Masaki, Pedrós, Pfutze, Rodríguez-Castelán, and Winkler (2024) points out that rural regions typically face higher costs for broadband and have fewer connectivity alternatives than urban locales, which further intensifies the digital divide. This lack of infrastructure serves as a significant obstacle to digital inclusion, hindering rural populations from obtaining essential services such as e-government, education, and healthcare.

Mawela, Ochara, and Twinomurinzi (2017) point out that rural communities in the country have not fully embraced or deployed e-government services. This may be attributed to a combination of factors such as high costs of digital services, low digital literacy, and limited access to reliable internet. Since 2004, e-government projects in South Africa have struggled due to the absence of effective frameworks to evaluate and measure their success. These challenges are not unique to South Africa, other developing countries face similar hurdles. In Zimbabwe, limited operational literacy and knowledge of ICT infrastructure hinder the success of e-government projects (Munkuli, 2015), while in Tanzania, concerns

about sustainability and the lack of long-term planning for e-government initiatives are significant issues (Sæbø, 2012). Similarly, Malawi has experienced slow e-government growth due to poor integration of public services and insecure ICT infrastructure (Makoza & Chigona, 2013; Mtingwi & Van Belle, 2012).

Mawela, Ochara, and Twinomurinzi (2016) report that in South Africa, nearly 35% of e-government projects fail, 50% remain incomplete, and only 15% succeed. The successful projects largely benefit urban areas, leaving rural communities at a disadvantage, though they contribute to the bigger portion of industrialisation. This is especially concerning for underprivileged populations who depend on government services to improve their lives. The United Nations Secretariat Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2008) emphasizes that the value of e-government lies not just in the technology itself, but in its potential to transform society. However, rural communities are at risk of being excluded from this transformation due to the persistent barriers they face in accessing digital services. Digital literacy programs, affordable broadband access, and tailored e-government services for rural communities are essential components of any strategy to enhance rural digital inclusion. Without addressing these challenges, the gap in e-government adoption between urban and rural areas will continue to widen, hindering the development of rural communities and their ability to fully participate in the digital economy.

E-Government and Its Benefits

E-government provides numerous advantages that greatly enhance entrepreneurship in rural regions, promoting economic development and empowering local enterprises. A primary benefit is the easy access to vital information, including market trends, regulatory guidelines, and funding options, which allows rural entrepreneurs to make well-informed choices and adeptly manage the intricacies of business operations (Corbitt & Al-Qirim, 2004). e-government platforms simplify administrative tasks such as online business registration, tax submissions, and licensing, thereby alleviating the time and financial pressures linked to bureaucratic processes, especially in remote and underserved areas (Ndou, 2004). This efficiency also enhances access to financial resources, as e-government systems facilitate the application process for government grants, loans, and subsidies, removing the necessity for travel and reducing obstacles to securing essential funding (Das & Das, 2022). These improvements foster a more effective and supportive atmosphere for rural entrepreneurship, stimulating local economic growth. These practical advantages, e-government encourages innovation by granting rural entrepreneurs access to advanced technologies and global market insights, enabling them to enhance productivity, launch innovative products, and compete in wider markets (Jhajharia, Shivnani & Jampala, 2024).

The Importance of E-Government for Economic Growth

Digital governance significantly contributes to economic development by enhancing access to information and services nationwide. It bridges the digital gap, facilitating connections between rural

areas and urban centers, thereby generating new economic opportunities and mitigating the migration of individuals from rural to urban locales in pursuit of improved prospects (LaRose et al., 2008). In the context of South Africa, for example, e-government initiatives have the potential to elevate the standards of healthcare and education in rural areas, thus enhancing living conditions and curbing depopulation (Jenkins, 2003). The expanded access to e-government services also broadens economic opportunities for citizens across various demographics, fostering a more integrated economy (Czernich et al., 2009). As the government advances this platform, it is crucial to address the challenges faced by rural communities regarding accessibility, affordability, and infrastructure.

Barriers to E-Government Adoption in Rural Communities

Despite the potential advantages, various obstacles impede the effective implementation of e-government in rural regions. A primary issue is the insufficient telecommunication infrastructure, as many rural areas continue to depend on outdated technologies such as 2G and 3G (Dhillon & Laxmi, 2015). The gradual deployment of fibre optic networks and the slow pace of digital migration have intensified the digital divide (National Department of Telecommunication Strategy, 2016). Affordability is a significant concern, with rural inhabitants often allocating a considerable portion of their income to internet access, which restricts their capacity to fully utilize e-government services (Mpinganjira, 2013). Additionally, the shortage of skilled professionals in rural areas presents a substantial barrier to the effective implementation and upkeep of e-government systems (Mpinganjira, 2013). Local government entities frequently lack the requisite ICT expertise, resulting in inefficiencies and failures in service delivery (Mawela et al., 2017). Furthermore, the lack of platforms available in local languages further distances rural citizens, as many are more proficient in their native languages than in English (Mawela et al., 2017).

Technology Acceptance Model Framework

This research used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to investigate the acceptance and utilisation of e-government services by rural communities, aiming to promote entrepreneurship and stimulate economic development. Established by Davis in 1989, TAM highlights two essential components perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) as fundamental factors influencing technology adoption. The model facilitates an examination of how rural residents assess the value (usefulness) and usability (ease) of e-government platforms (Anh, 2024). If these communities recognise the platforms as beneficial for enhancing access to services that could foster entrepreneurship or alleviate poverty, their likelihood of adopting the technology increases.

Furthermore, if the e-government platform is regarded as user-friendly, especially in light of potential obstacles such as limited digital literacy or inadequate technological infrastructure in rural areas, the

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

rates of adoption are anticipated to rise. The application of TAM in this study provides considerable advantages, including the identification of obstacles to technology adoption and insights into the interaction of rural communities with e-government services. By concentrating on PU and PEOU, the model fosters a more profound comprehension of the elements that shape rural users' intentions to adopt these platforms, thereby assisting policymakers in creating more accessible and user-centric solutions. This is vital for addressing issues like digital illiteracy and insufficient infrastructure, which are common in rural environments.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted in the rural community of Ga-Mothiba, located approximately 40 kilometres North of Polokwane in Limpopo Province. A descriptive research design was used to explore contemporary issues and collect detailed, context-specific data (Salkind, 2020:30). A descriptive research design was chosen for this study to enable a systematic examination of current challenges and opportunities related to entrepreneurship development in rural areas, specifically focusing on the role of e-government infrastructure. This approach was appropriate for capturing detailed, contextual information without altering the natural setting, allowing the researchers to understand community perspectives within the rural environment of Ga-Mothiba.

The study targeted community members and leaders in Ga-Mothiba, located 40 kilometres North of Polokwane in Limpopo Province. A purposive sampling method was used to ensure the inclusion of individuals with relevant knowledge and experience, thereby enhancing the quality and depth of the data collected.

Data was collected using structured, closed-ended questionnaires that were administered in person to 108 participants. Out of these, 90 questionnaires were completed and returned, yielding a robust response rate of approximately 83%. The structured format of the questionnaire was particularly advantageous for conducting descriptive statistical analysis, which was selected to effectively summarize and interpret the data patterns. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency offered valuable insights into the demographic characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of the participants. The data analysis was suitable given the quantitative focus of the study, which aimed to provide an overview of the current conditions without delving into causal relationships. To enhance reliability, the questionnaire underwent pre-testing with a small, similar group and was revised for clarity and consistency before being distributed widely.

Data Analysis

Closed-ended questionnaires were distributed to identify the challenges that entrepreneurial development and answer are presented in figure 1 below.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

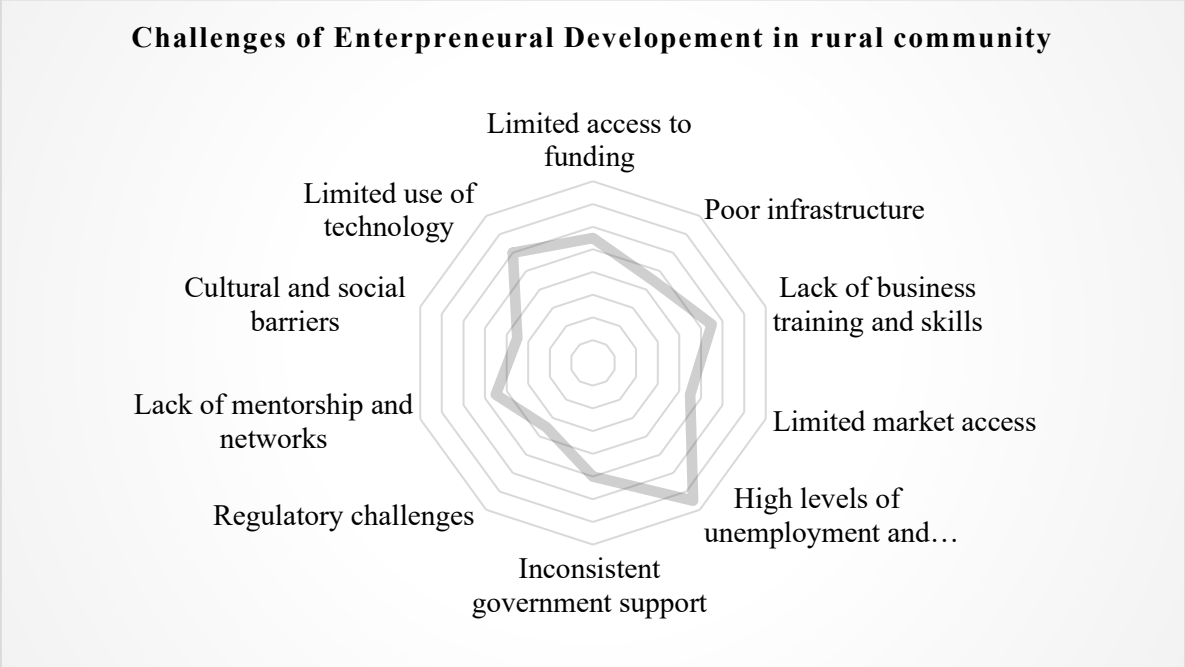

Figure 1: Challenges of entrepreneurial in rural community

As per figure 1 above the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas like Ga-Mothiba encounters numerous obstacles that impede business growth and sustainability. A significant challenge is the limited availability of funding, as many prospective entrepreneurs find it difficult to obtain start-up capital or loans due to insufficient collateral, unfavorable credit histories, and the lack of financial institutions in these regions. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure presents a substantial hindrance; poor road conditions, unreliable electricity supply, and limited access to clean water and transportation services severely restrict business operations and diminish opportunities for expansion.

These structural challenges are intensified by a deficiency in business training and essential skills, leaving many individuals with entrepreneurial aspirations lacking the financial, managerial, and operational expertise necessary to establish sustainable enterprises. Additionally, market access remains a critical issue, as geographic isolation and high transportation costs make it challenging for small businesses in these communities to reach wider markets or gain visibility beyond their local clientele. This situation is further aggravated by elevated levels of unemployment and poverty, which diminish local purchasing power and hinder business growth within the community. Although government support exists in various forms, it is often inconsistent or poorly coordinated, with delays in policy execution and limited awareness of available support programs undermining the effectiveness of state initiatives aimed at fostering small business development. Moreover, complex regulatory frameworks and protracted business registration processes deter many entrepreneurs, leading them to operate in the informal sector.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

A significant concern is the absence of mentorship and professional networks. Numerous entrepreneurs operate in solitude, lacking access to seasoned guidance or business support systems that could assist them in overcoming challenges and expanding their enterprises. Cultural and social norms, such as resistance to change and gender-based expectations, can further hinder entrepreneurship, particularly among women and young people. Additionally, the limited adoption of technology poses a substantial barrier. Insufficient awareness, digital skills, and resources hinder many entrepreneurs from utilising contemporary tools that could boost efficiency, enhance visibility, and improve competitiveness.

The researcher asked participants to indicate the implications this has on challenges entrepreneurial development. The responses are summarized and presented in Figure 2.

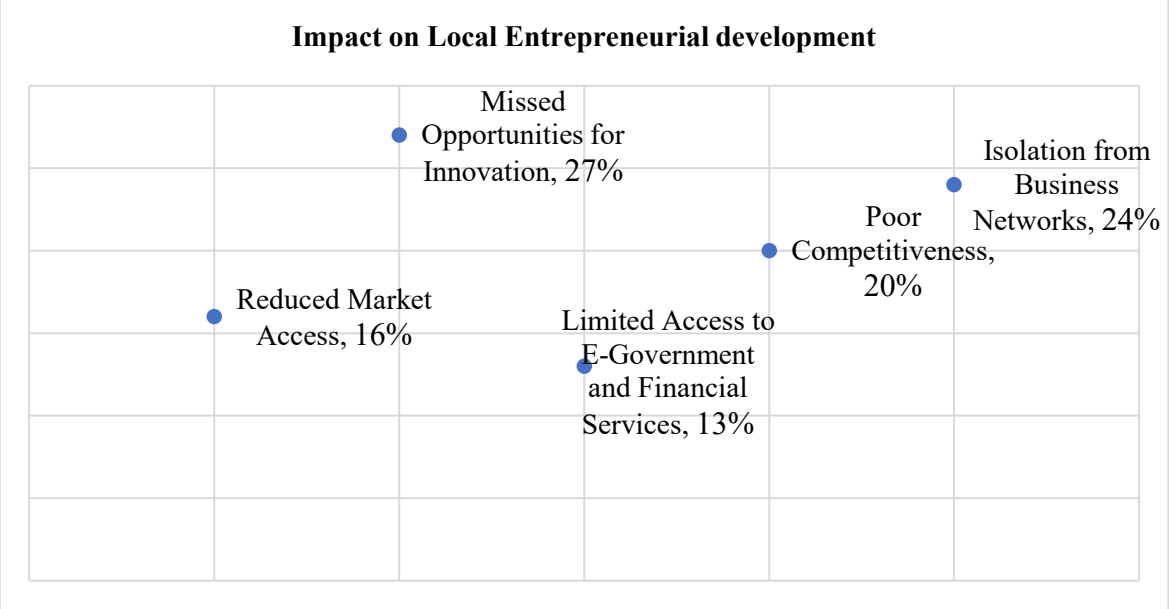

Figure 2: lack of egovernment on entrepreneurial development

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of survey participants reported that the unavailability of e-government services has led to missed opportunities for entrepreneurs in rural areas. Twenty-four percent (24%) of those surveyed indicated that this lack of access disconnects entrepreneurs from crucial business networks. Furthermore, twenty percent (20%) of respondents stated that inadequate access to technology diminishes their competitiveness compared to entrepreneurs in other provinces and countries. Sixteen percent (16%) of participants emphasised that the lack of current market information restricts their ability to enter new markets. Lastly, thirteen percent (13%) of respondents noted that entrepreneurs frequently face challenges in registering their businesses, applying for funding, or accessing training programs offered through digital platforms.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

The next question was on the benefits of egovernment in rural communities, and answer is presented in figure 3 above:

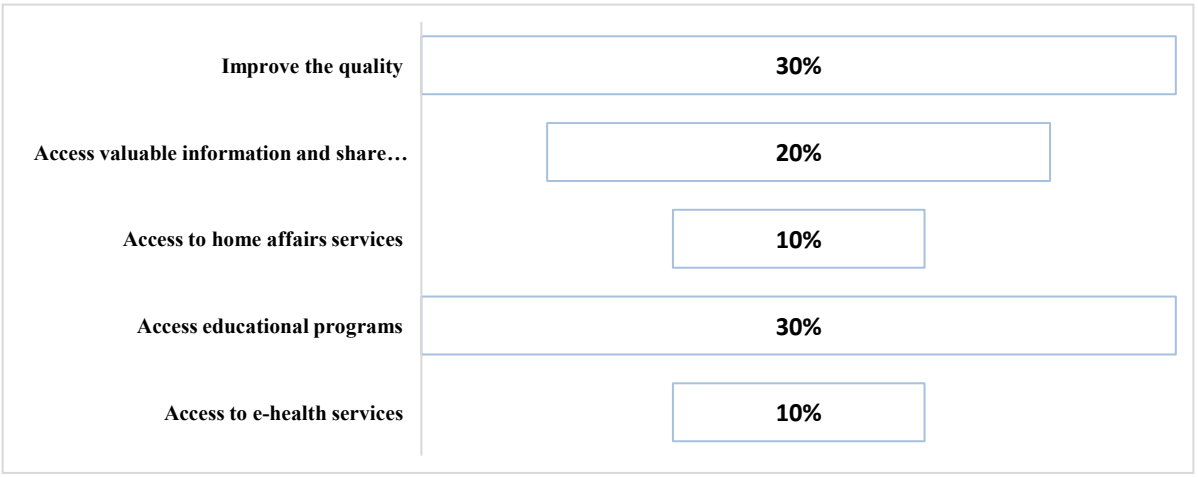

Figure 3: Benefits of e-government in rural community

Thirty percent (30%) of respondents stated that access to e-government services would improve the quality of life for rural citizens. Twenty percent (20%) of participants mentioned that valuable information and knowledge could be shared through these platforms. Ten percent (10%) of respondents noted that they could access information related to Home Affairs. Another 30% of participants indicated that e-government would not be able to assist scholars with e-education. Lastly, 10% of participants mentioned that access to e-health services would benefit citizens in general.

Discussion of the Results

The information gathered from the closed-ended surveys offered an in-depth perspective on the difficulties and possible advantages related to entrepreneurial growth in rural areas, especially in Ga-Mothiba. The findings, illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3, provide a detailed comprehension of the hurdles encountered by entrepreneurs and the potential impact of e-government in alleviating these issues.

The Obstacles to Entrepreneurial Growth in Rural Communities

The obstacles to entrepreneurial growth in rural communities, such as Ga-Mothiba, are illustrated in Figure 1. A primary challenge highlighted by participants is the limited availability of funding, as many prospective entrepreneurs struggle to obtain start-up capital due to factors like inadequate collateral, unfavorable credit histories, and the lack of financial institutions in these regions. Access to credit is a major concern that must be practically dealt with. This is generally about credit availability, cost and quality This financial exclusion intensifies the challenges of starting and expanding businesses in rural areas, where access to capital is vital for development.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

Additionally, inadequate infrastructure poses a significant hurdle, with respondents pointing out the detrimental effects of poor road conditions, unreliable electricity, and limited access to water and transportation services. Rural transportation infrastructure is a critical component of development in isolated communities in across the globe. These infrastructural deficiencies create an environment where business operations are not only inefficient but also susceptible to interruptions, severely hindering entrepreneurs' capacity to grow or sustain their enterprises.

Moreover, the absence of business training and essential skills was recognised as a major impediment. Numerous rural entrepreneurs lack the necessary expertise in critical areas such as financial management, marketing, and strategic planning, which are crucial for operating a successful business. This skills deficit often leads to poor decision-making, lost opportunities, and challenges in achieving long-term sustainability. Market access also surfaced as a significant issue. Geographic isolation, coupled with high transportation costs, limits rural entrepreneurs' ability to reach beyond their local markets and access larger consumer bases. This isolation is further exacerbated by elevated levels of unemployment and poverty, which diminish local purchasing power and constrain the viability of businesses in these regions. Consequently, many entrepreneurs struggle to generate adequate revenue to expand their operations.

In addition to the structural obstacles mentioned, government assistance—while available in various forms has frequently been inconsistent or poorly coordinated. Participants highlighted delays in the execution of policies and a lack of awareness regarding existing government programs, which diminishes the effectiveness of state efforts to support small enterprises.

Furthermore, regulatory hurdles, such as complicated business registration procedures, deter entrepreneurs from formalising their operations, resulting in many choosing to remain in the informal sector. The lack of mentorship and professional networks was also identified as a significant concern. Entrepreneurs often find themselves without access to experienced mentors or business support systems that could offer essential guidance and promote business development. Additionally, cultural and social norms, particularly those influenced by gender and generational expectations, further obstruct entrepreneurship, particularly for women and young people. Lastly, the limited adoption of technology presents a major challenge. Numerous rural entrepreneurs lack the digital skills or resources required to utilize modern technologies that could enhance their competitiveness, improve operational efficiency, and broaden their market reach.

Implications of E-Government on Entrepreneurial Development

As illustrated in Figure 2, the lack of e-government services has been recognized as a major obstacle to entrepreneurial growth in rural regions. A total of twenty-seven percent (27%) of participants reported

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

that the unavailability of e-government services has led to lost opportunities for rural entrepreneurs. This emphasizes the essential function that digital government platforms could serve in linking entrepreneurs to resources, business networks, and funding opportunities. Additionally, twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents highlighted that the lack of e-government services isolates entrepreneurs from crucial business networks.

This further illustrates the significance of digital platforms in promoting collaboration and information sharing among entrepreneurs, mentors, investors, and other stakeholders. The absence of such connectivity restricts knowledge exchange and limits the potential for business growth in rural areas. Furthermore, twenty percent (20%) of participants indicated that inadequate access to technology reduces the competitiveness of rural entrepreneurs against businesses in other provinces or countries. This finding points to the larger issue of digital exclusion, where rural entrepreneurs are unable to leverage modern tools and platforms that could improve their business operations, visibility, and competitiveness in the global marketplace. Lastly, sixteen percent (16%) of respondents noted that the lack of current market information constrains their ability to enter new markets. Without access to digital platforms that provide timely and accurate market intelligence, rural entrepreneurs find themselves at a disadvantage compared to their urban peers who have superior access to such information.

Finally, 13% of respondents emphasized the challenges that entrepreneurs encounter when attempting to register their businesses, seek funding, and access training programs via e-government platforms. The absence of these services not only hinders the formal establishment of businesses but also limits access to vital resources that could foster business development and innovation.

Benefits of E-Government in Rural Communities

As illustrated in Figure 3, the availability of e-government services is perceived to hold significant advantages for rural communities. A notable thirty percent (30%) of participants expressed that such access would enhance the quality of life for individuals in rural areas. This observation underscores the extensive societal implications of digital governance, where improved access to public services and resources can elevate the socio-economic status of rural inhabitants. Moreover, twenty percent (20%) of respondents acknowledged that e-government platforms could facilitate the sharing of valuable information and knowledge. This indicates that digital platforms may act as essential conduits for distributing critical information pertaining to health, education, government services, and business opportunities, thus empowering both rural entrepreneurs and citizens. Nevertheless, despite these optimistic views, thirty percent (30%) of participants believed that e-government would not effectively support e-education for students. This points to a deficiency in the current e-government service offerings, especially concerning education and capacity-building for youth and entrepreneurs in rural settings. Furthermore, ten percent (10%) of respondents emphasized the potential benefits of accessing

e-health services, which could improve healthcare delivery and enhance the overall well-being of rural populations. Access to such services can yield significant benefits, as a healthier populace is more inclined to engage in entrepreneurial ventures and contribute to economic growth.

Conclusion

This study investigated the barriers and potential of entrepreneurship development in rural South African communities, with a particular emphasis on the role of e-government infrastructure in fostering economic inclusion and reducing poverty and unemployment. Focusing on Ga-Mothiba in Limpopo, the research found that rural entrepreneurs faced significant challenges, including inadequate digital infrastructure, low levels of digital literacy, and limited access to coordinated government support, all of which hindered their ability to effectively utilize e-government services and digital tools for business development. Despite these challenges, the study highlighted the substantial potential of e-government to transform rural economies by improving access to markets, simplifying administrative processes, and enhancing the delivery of essential services such as healthcare and entrepreneurial training. These benefits, however, remained largely untapped due to systemic constraints, emphasizing the need for strategic investment in infrastructure, targeted digital literacy programs, and improved intergovernmental coordination. While the study was limited by its focus on a single rural community and the use of self-reported, cross-sectional data, its findings underscored the importance of expanding e-government in user-friendly formats and local languages to empower rural entrepreneurs and promote sustainable, inclusive socio-economic development aligned with national policy frameworks such as the Batho Pele principles.

References

Abu-Shanab, E.A. and Osmani, M., 2019. E-government as a tool for improving entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Electronic Government Research (IJEGR)*, *15*(1), pp.36-46.

Aichholzer, G., 2004, August. Electronic access to public sector information: Some key issues. In *International Conference on Electronic Government* (pp. 525-528). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Al-Ansi, A.M., Garad, A., Jaboob, M. and Al-Ansi, A., 2024. Elevating e-government: Unleashing the power of AI and IoT for enhanced public services. *Heliyon*, *10*(23).

Anh, T.V., 2024. MESSAGE FROM THE HOST UNIVERSITY

Bahia, K., Castells, P., Cruz, G., Masaki, T., Pedrós, X., Pfutze, T., Rodríguez-Castelán, C. and Winkler, H., 2024. The welfare effects of mobile broadband internet: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Development Economics*, *170*, p.103314.

Chari, S.G., 2024. Bridging Gaps, Building Futures: Tackling Socio-Economic Disparities Through Education and Technology. *London Journal of Research In Humanities and Social Sciences*, *24*(16), pp.1-12.

Corbitt, B.J. and Al-Qirim, N.A. eds., 2004. E-business, E-government & Small and Medium-size Enterprises: Opportunities and Challenges.

Das, A. and Das, S.S., 2022. E-Government and Entrepreneurship: online government services and the ease of starting business. *Information Systems Frontiers*, *24*(3), pp.1027-1039.

Das, U., Ansari, M.A. and Ghosh, S., 2024. Measures of livelihoods and their effect on vulnerability of farmers to climate change: evidence from coastal and non-coastal regions in India. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, *26*(2), pp.4801-4836.

Dhillon, R. and Laxmi, V., 2015. Analysis the Impact of E-Governance Services in Rural Areas of Mansa District-Punjab. *Social influence*, *151*, pp.0-736.

Engl, F., Czernich, N., Kretschmer, T., Kiessl, T. and Falck, O., 2009. Regulatory framework for next-generation access networks across europe. *CESifo DICE Report*, *7*(1), pp.35-40.

Güreşçi, E., 2022. Agricultural factors as the root cause of rural migration from a global perspective.

Heeks, R. and Bailur, S., 2007. Analyzing e-government research: Perspectives, philosophies, theories, methods, and practice. *Government information quarterly*, *24*(2), pp.243-265.

Jenkins, K., 2003. *Rethinking history*. Routledge.

Jhajharia, P., Shivnani, T. and Jampala, M.B., 2024. Bridging The Rural-Urban Technological Gap: Leveraging RBS for Sustainable Rural Growth. In *Multidisciplinary Approaches for Sustainable Development* (pp. 239-246). CRC Press.

Kosasih, A. and Sulaiman, E., 2024. Digital transformation in rural settings: Unlocking opportunities for sustainable economic growth and community empowerment. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism and Entrepreneurship*, *5*(2), pp.129-143.

Larose, C., Canuel, R., Lucotte, M. and Di Giulio, R.T., 2008. Toxicological effects of methylmercury on walleye (Sander vitreus) and perch (Perca flavescens) from lakes of the boreal forest. *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology Part C: Toxicology & Pharmacology*, *147*(2), pp.139-149.

Lombo, N. and Subban, M., 2024. Physical infrastructure challenges in rural schools: Reflections to promote quality education. *Administratio Publica*, *32*(1), pp.69-101.

Makoza, F. and Chigona, W., 2013, September. Accessibility of e-Government websites: case of Malawi. In *Proceedings of the 15th Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications, Cape Town* (pp. 10-13).

Mawela, T., Ochara, N.M. and Twinomurinzi, H., 2016, September. E-government implementation: Lessons from South African municipalities. In *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists* (pp. 1-10).

Mawela, T., Ochara, N.M. and Twinomurinzi, H., 2017. E-government implementation: A reflection on South African municipalities. *South African Computer Journal*, *29*(1), pp.147-171.

Mawela, T., Ochara, N.M. and Twinomurinzi, H., 2017. E-government implementation: A reflection on South African municipalities. *South African Computer Journal*, *29*(1), pp.147-171.

Mkhomazi, S.S. and Iyamu, T., 2011, December. The social context of broadband infrastructure sharing. In *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Information Integration and Web-based Applications and Services* (pp. 403-407).

Mpinganjira, M., 2013. An empirical investigation of factors affecting the adoption of e-government services. *Journal of contemporary management*, *10*(1), pp.320-338.

Mtingwi, J. and Van Belle, J., 2012. The state of e-government and m-government readiness in Malawi. *International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Science*, *6*(1), pp.58-68.

Munkuli, T., 2015. *An evaluation of e-government implementation: the case of Harare City Council* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).

Ndou, V., 2004. E-government for developing countries: Opportunities and challenges. *Electron. J. Inf. Syst. Dev. Ctries.*, *18*(1), pp.1-24.

Noruwana, N., 2015. Factors relating to and impacting eGovernment readiness in South Africa: a case of the Western Cape Government.

Obeidat RA, Abu-Shanab EA. Drivers of E-government and E-business in Jordan. Journal of emerging technologies in web Intelligence. 2010 Aug 1;2(3):204-11.

Omweri, F.S., 2024. A Systematic Literature Review of E-Government Implementation in Developing Countries: Examining Urban-Rural Disparities, Institutional Capacity, and Socio-Cultural Factors in the Context of Local Governance and Progress towards SDG 16.6. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *8*(8), pp.1173-1199.

Rawahi, K.A., Coombs, C. and Doherty, N., 2016. The realization of public value through e-government: a structuration perspective.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 06 Issue: 02 Year: 2025
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2025.nmlt.45849

Sæbø, Ø., 2012. E-government in Tanzania: current status and future challenges. In *Electronic Government: 11th IFIP WG 8.5 International Conference, EGOV 2012, Kristiansand, Norway, September 3-6, 2012. Proceedings 11* (pp. 198-209). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Seretse, M., Chukwuere, J., Lubbe, S. and Klopper, R., 2018. Problems around accessing information in rural communities. *Alternation Journal*, *25*(1), pp.214-244.