Ambidextrous: Journal of Innovation, Efficiency and Technology in Organization
https://journal.takaza.id/index.php/ambidextrous
Vol. 3, no. 02 , 2025 , pp. 120-124
E-ISSN: 3031-7002
E-mail:ambidex@takaza.id

The Role of 5G Technology in Improving the Speed and Quality of Internet Services in Urban Areas

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Article History:
Received: dd-mm-yyyy
Revised: dd-mm-yyyy
Accepted: dd-mm-yyyy

Keywords:*5G Technology, Internet Speed, Network Latency, Service Quality, Urban Networks*

Abstract:*This study examines the performance of 5G technology in dense urban areas, where population growth and digital activities such as video streaming and IoT are putting pressure on 4G network capacity. The study aimed to evaluate the role of 5G in improving download speeds, latency, and stability of internet services through empirical comparisons with 4G. This quantitative descriptive study used a population of internet users around the University of West Sulawesi with a purposive sample of 50 respondents aged 18-45 years. Instruments included the Ookla Speedtest application and a Likert scale questionnaire, analyzed with descriptive statistics and t-tests using SPSS 26. The results showed 5G download speeds of 300-600 Mbps, upload speeds of 50-120 Mbps, latency of 8-12 ms, and very high stability, with streaming quality improvements of up to 90%. The conclusion states that 5G significantly supports smart city transformation despite being limited to a local sample.*

How to Cite: Nurhuda, Rida Ramli, Firta Dewi. (2025). *The Role of 5G Technology in Improving the Speed and Quality of Internet Services in Urban Areas.* *3*(02). pp https://doi.org/10.61536/ambidextrous.v3i02.377

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Introduction

The development of telecommunications technology from 1G to 4G has revolutionized global connectivity, with 5G emerging as the latest generation, offering greater bandwidth, higher data speeds, and lower latency than its predecessors (Giordani et al., 2020). In urban areas of Indonesia, such as Jakarta and Surabaya, population growth and digital activities such as video streaming, online transportation, and IoT are increasingly putting pressure on 4G

network capacity, which is beginning to reach its limits (Putra et al., 2023; Suryanto, 2024). This creates an urgent demand for more reliable wireless infrastructure to support the transformation towards smart cities (Hutajulu, 2021).

Digital activity in Indonesia's major cities continues to surge, with data demand per square kilometer in Jakarta projected to reach 17.6 Gbps by 2025, driven by rapid urbanization and the adoption of cloud-based services (Kusuma, 2019; Raksawardhana et al., 2023).

While 5G promises significant improvements, dense urban environments present unique challenges such as high user density, signal interference from high-rise buildings, and limited mmWave propagation (Larasati, 2022; Goswami, 2025). Suboptimal network configurations and congestion in urban hotspots further worsen performance, leading to decreased throughput despite increased base station density (Banerjee et al., 2024).

This study aims to empirically evaluate the role of 5G in improving download speeds, latency, and internet service stability in urban areas through direct measurements and comparisons with 4G. The research's urgency lies in the urgent need to optimize network planning amidst Indonesia's digital growth, while its novelty lies in its contextual analysis in Indonesian cities using recent field data that integrates local factors such as urban interference (Putra et al., 2023; Raksawardhana et al., 2023).

Research Methods

Types and Methods of Research

This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach to illustrate the role of 5G technology in improving the speed and quality of internet services in urban areas, focusing on measuring variables such as download and upload speeds, latency, and network stability compared to 4G. This approach was chosen because it allows for objective empirical analysis of numerical data, consistent with quantitative descriptive methods that emphasize field data collection to identify network performance patterns (Sugiyono, 2023; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This method also aligns with similar studies that evaluate 5G performance through direct measurements in urban environments (Putra et al., 2023; Raksawardhana et al., 2023).

Data Analysis Instruments and Techniques

The research instruments included speed test applications such as Ookla Speedtest to measure real-time download, upload, and latency speeds, as well as a Likert-scale questionnaire to assess user experience regarding service stability and quality. Instrument validity was verified through a pilot test on 10 respondents, while reliability was tested with a Cronbach's Alpha above 0.8, following standard procedures for measuring cellular network performance (Emzir, 2022; Sudaryono, 2024). Data analysis techniques involved descriptive statistics such as mean, median, and frequency distribution using SPSS version 26 to compare 4G and 5G performance, plus independent t-tests for significance of differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all internet users in the urban area of West Sulawesi University and its surrounding areas, estimated to number in the thousands based on local

https://doi.org/10.61536/ambidextrous.vxxxx.xxx

cellular operator data. A purposive sample of 50 respondents actively using 4G and 5G services on compatible devices, aged 18-45 years and with a minimum daily internet usage frequency of 4 hours, was selected to represent active urban users (Sugiyono, 2023; Putra et al., 2023). This sample size was sufficient for quantitative descriptive analysis using the Slovin formula with a 10% error rate (Sudaryono, 2024).

Research Procedures

The research procedure began with instrument preparation and ethical clearance, followed by primary data collection through speed test measurements at 10 busy urban locations for two weeks during peak hours (7:00-9:00 AM and 5:00-7:00 PM WIB), and distribution of an online questionnaire via Google Forms. Secondary data was obtained from operator reports and related literature, then processed through data cleaning, descriptive analysis, and interpretation of results to compare network performance (Emzir, 2022; Raksawardhana et al., 2023). The entire process adhered to research ethics principles with informed consent and respondent anonymity (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Results and Discussion

The research results show a significant increase in 5G usage:

Table 1 Results

Parameter	4G	5G
Download Speed	35-60 Mbps	300-600 Mbps
Upload Speed	10-20 Mbps	50-120 Mbps
Latency	30-50 ms	8-12 ms
Network Stability	Currently	Very Stable

5G users report up to 90% improved video streaming quality, smoother online gaming, and faster app access. Furthermore, 5G supports more devices in a single area without experiencing network congestion. These findings indicate that 5G improves not only speed but also overall service quality.

Research results show that 5G technology provides significant improvements to internet quality in urban areas. Field measurements show 5G download speeds reaching 380–520 Mbps.

Mbps, much faster than 4G. It also has very low latency, making activities like streaming, video calls, and online gaming smoother and more seamless.

Observations show that the 5G network remains stable even in crowded areas. Some locations with many tall buildings slightly reduced signal strength, but not enough to affect overall internet quality. Furthermore, the majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with 5G speed and stability.

Overall, 5G plays a vital role in increasing the speed and convenience of internet services in urban areas and supporting the digital needs of modern society.

Conclusion

5G technology has been shown to significantly improve the speed and quality of internet services in urban areas, with key findings showing download speeds reaching 300-600 Mbps, upload speeds of 50-120 Mbps, latency of 8-12 ms, and very high network stability compared to 4G which only has 35-60 Mbps download and latency of 30-50 ms. Users report up to 90% improvement in video streaming quality, smoother online gaming, and faster application access

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without congestion even in crowded areas, supporting digital needs such as IoT and smart cities. Practical implications include recommendations for mobile operators to expand base station densification in urban hotspots to optimize network planning and support Indonesia's digital economic transformation.

However, limitations of this study lie in the limited sample size of 50 respondents around the University of West Sulawesi, which may underrepresent variations in national urban areas. Furthermore, measurements were influenced by weather factors and interference from tall buildings. Suggestions for future research include expanding the sample to large cities like Jakarta using longitudinal drive-testing methods and integrating AI analytics for congestion prediction to produce a more comprehensive 5G optimization model. These findings provide a basis for policymakers to accelerate inclusive 5G adoption in remote areas.

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