

Evaluation of Public Satisfaction with Government Services, Analysis of Determinants of Service Quality in the Digital Administration Era.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates public satisfaction with government services and analyzes determinants of service quality in the digital administration era. Using a qualitative approach, the research applies an embedded single-case study with a service-journey orientation to capture end-to-end citizen experiences across digital and hybrid channels. The study was conducted in Jakarta, selected for its high-volume digital public services, diverse user profiles, and multi-agency coordination context. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 24 citizen service users and 15 key informants (service managers, platform administrators, complaint officers, and frontline staff), supported by observation at hybrid service points and document review. Findings show that satisfaction depends on whether digital services reduce effort and uncertainty, confirm expectations of speed and transparency, and provide reliable status tracking and responsive problem resolution. The most influential determinants cluster into platform quality (usability, accessibility), process quality (reliability, timeliness, cross-channel consistency), and governance quality (privacy confidence, transparency, perceived fairness). The study recommends integrated service redesign, stronger interoperability, real-time progress communication, strengthened complaint handling, and clearer privacy and accountability assurances to improve satisfaction and sustain digital service use.



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INTRODUCTION

Public administration has undergone rapid transformation over the last decade, driven by widespread internet access, mobile connectivity, and the growing use of data-informed decision-making. Governments increasingly shift from face-to-face service delivery toward integrated digital services that promise greater efficiency and citizen-centered outcomes. In this environment, digital administration is no longer merely the conversion of paper forms into online templates or the automation of manual procedures (Kinder, 2025a). Rather, it represents a reconfiguration of service processes, governance arrangements, and citizen experience across multiple touchpoints. As citizens interact with public services in more diverse and time-sensitive ways, expectations rise accordingly: services are expected to be accessible at any time, transparent in decision-making, secure in data handling, consistent across channels, and responsive to individual needs. Consequently, evaluating public satisfaction becomes essential for assessing whether digital reforms generate public value, strengthen institutional trust, and enhance the legitimacy of government performance (Callens & Verhoest, 2024).

The state of the art in research on citizen satisfaction and service quality in the e-government era highlights an expanding focus on user experience, platform reliability, information security, and the quality of digital interaction (Gupta et al., 2026). Earlier service quality traditions largely relied on perception-based dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles yet in digital public services, “tangibles” evolve into interface quality, navigability, clarity of information, and system performance (Qin et al., 2024). Recent studies further emphasize that satisfaction is shaped not only by functional performance but also by trust in institutions, perceived fairness, and perceived privacy risk. In addition, omnichannel strategies and digital-by-default policies introduce new operational and governance challenges: cross-agency interoperability, consistency of service standards, real-time complaint management, and coordinated follow-up.

Key Data Table 1

Data	Show
Indonesia: 230 million; penetration 80.5% (Oct 2025)	Most citizens can access digital/hybrid services, so satisfaction is increasingly shaped by platform and process quality rather than access alone.
UN EGDI: 0.79911, rank 64/193 (2024)	National digital capability has advanced, making service-journey quality (clarity, tracking, responsiveness) a realistic performance expectation.
National SPBE Index: 3.12/5 (2024)	Digital administration maturity is “good,” supporting evaluation of satisfaction based on end-to-end experience and governance factors (privacy, fairness, transparency).
Ombudsman public complaints received: 10,837 (2024)	Persistent complaint volume indicates satisfaction and service quality gaps remain visible and measurable.

Source: Ombudsman Indonesian Annual Report 2024

The central problem addressed in this study emerges from the disconnect between technology investment and citizens’ perceived service outcomes. Many digital modernization efforts yield a proliferation of platforms and applications, yet citizens continue to encounter “virtual queues,” inconsistent information across agencies, repeated verification steps, and opaque service status updates. Under such conditions, services may be perceived as digitally available but not practically helpful, limiting gains in satisfaction. Another persistent issue is the unequal distribution of benefits due to disparities in access and digital literacy (Chokoe, 2024). While digitally proficient citizens may experience faster and more convenient processes, vulnerable groups often face barriers related to device ownership, connectivity, accessibility needs, or the lack of assisted service options. Therefore, evaluating public satisfaction must be coupled with a rigorous analysis of service quality determinants to identify which factors matter most, for whom, and under what conditions (Li & Gietel-Basten, 2025).

Several research gaps can be identified in the literature on digital public service delivery. First, many studies operationalize digital service quality primarily through technical indicators such as speed, system uptime, or interface features, while giving limited attention to governance attributes including accountability, transparency, privacy protection, and procedural justice. Second, research frequently treats service channels as separate domains (online versus offline), even though contemporary service delivery is commonly hybrid and omnichannel; citizen satisfaction is often formed through a service journey that spans multiple channels (Biancu & Ongaro, 2025). Third, empirical findings on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction are often highly context-dependent, yet fewer models systematically examine citizen characteristics such as digital literacy, prior negative experiences, and institutional trust as factors that may amplify or weaken these relationships (Costa et al., 2024). Fourth, satisfaction is commonly measured as a generalized outcome (overall satisfaction or reuse intention) without differentiating stages of the service process (information search, registration, verification, case handling, follow-up, complaint resolution), even though the determinants of satisfaction may vary across these stages (Long et al., 2025).

Building on these gaps, the novelty of this study lies in developing and testing a more comprehensive framework of service quality determinants in the era of digital administration, with public satisfaction as the primary outcome. The intended contribution is not simply to replicate existing models of digital service quality, but to integrate technical dimensions (usability, reliability, security), process dimensions (procedural clarity, cross-channel consistency, timeliness, complaint responsiveness), and governance dimensions (decision transparency, accountability mechanisms, privacy protection, perceived fairness) within a single explanatory model (Parinusa et al., 2024). In addition, this study adopts a service journey perspective to identify critical moments that shape citizen perceptions, thereby enabling more targeted recommendations for improving performance at key “truth points” in service interactions.

The research questions are formulated to guide a systematic analysis. The first question examines how citizens evaluate their satisfaction with government services within digital administrative contexts, considering the overall end-to-end user experience. The second question investigates which determinants of digital service quality exert the strongest influence on satisfaction, encompassing platform

attributes (usability, accessibility, security) as well as procedural and governance attributes (timeliness, transparency, fairness, complaint handling) (Valaskova et al., 2025). The third question explores whether these effects differ across citizen groups based on characteristics such as digital literacy, frequency of service use, and institutional trust. The fourth question assesses how channel integration (online and offline) contributes to satisfaction, including the role of assisted service, information consistency, and effective follow-up mechanisms.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to evaluate public satisfaction with government services in the digital administration era and to identify the determinants of service quality that most decisively shape that satisfaction (Artisa & Ningrum, 2024). Specifically, the study aims to develop a satisfaction evaluation approach suited to digital-hybrid services, test the relationships between multi-dimensional service quality factors and citizen satisfaction, and map priority improvement areas that can strengthen citizen experience. The study also seeks to provide evidence-based insights on digital governance particularly transparency, accountability, and data protection as substantive components of service quality that influence both satisfaction and public trust (Boeger, 2024).

The theoretical significance of this research lies in strengthening the digital public administration literature through an integrative framework linking service quality, governance attributes, and public satisfaction under omnichannel delivery (Taufiqurokhman et al., 2024). The study is expected to contribute to ongoing debates about the shifting focus of performance indicators from procedural efficiency alone toward citizen experience and public value creation, while reassessing the applicability of traditional service quality dimensions in platform-mediated environments (Газарян, 2024). Academically, the study supports instrument development, offers an empirically testable model that may be replicated across service contexts, and opens avenues for examining moderating mechanisms such as digital literacy and institutional trust. Practically, the findings can inform service improvement strategies, including process redesign, cross-channel standardization, strengthened security and privacy safeguards, enhanced complaint resolution pathways, and more evidence-driven technology investment priorities aligned with satisfaction outcomes (Kinder, 2025b).

This study also acknowledges limitations that should be considered in interpreting its findings. Survey-based satisfaction measures are susceptible to perceptual bias and recall bias, especially when respondents evaluate experiences that occurred at different times and under varying circumstances. Service heterogeneity presents an additional limitation: licensing, social assistance, and civil registration services may differ substantially in complexity and workflow, leading to variation in satisfaction determinants across service types (Suprastiyo, 2025). Moreover, digital ecosystems evolve rapidly; platform upgrades, policy changes, or shifts in privacy governance may influence results depending on the period of data collection. Sampling constraints may further limit representativeness, particularly for vulnerable populations who are often underrepresented in online surveys.

Future research can extend these contributions through longitudinal designs that capture changes in satisfaction over time, particularly following service reforms or platform enhancements. Subsequent studies may also combine perceptual data with behavioral and administrative data such as system usage logs, processing times, and complaint records to reduce bias and strengthen validity. Comparative research across regions, agencies, or service domains would help clarify how contextual factors such as organizational capacity, infrastructure quality, and service culture condition satisfaction outcomes (Didin et al., 2024). Finally, deeper inquiry into digital ethics and data governance including the use of artificial intelligence in service delivery (chatbots, automated verification, risk scoring) is increasingly important, as it may significantly shape perceptions of fairness, transparency, and trust. In this way, the present study aims to serve as a foundation for advancing digital administration that is not only technologically modern, but also substantively high-quality and responsive to public needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital public administration has reshaped how citizens encounter government, shifting routine interactions information seeking, registration, verification, case tracking, and complaints from predominantly in-person encounters to platform-mediated service journeys. This transition has raised a core evaluative question aligned with the study title, *Evaluation of Public Satisfaction with Government*

Services: An Analysis of Service Quality Determinants in the Digital Administration Era: whether digitalization improves satisfaction because it enhances service quality, or whether it merely relocates friction into new forms such as interface complexity, fragmented portals, repeated identity checks, and unclear status updates (Siddique, 2025). Contemporary evidence in e-government research suggests that citizen satisfaction is strongly conditioned by the quality of digital services and associated trust-related perceptions, rather than by the presence of technology alone.

The literature on citizen satisfaction in digital public services increasingly treats satisfaction as an outcome of a multidimensional service experience rather than a single post-transaction attitude. Studies in public administration and information systems emphasize that citizens judge services based on efficiency and timeliness, usability and accessibility, perceived reliability, information accuracy, responsiveness to issues, and fairness/legitimacy cues such as transparency and accountability. These judgments often occur across hybrid channels; citizens may begin online, seek clarification via call centers or in-person offices, and return to digital platforms to complete steps (Abdullah, 2025). Where service design is coherent and citizen-centered, satisfaction tends to increase; where design is fragmented or inconsistent, satisfaction may stagnate despite modernization. This is particularly salient because many reforms focus on front-end digitalization while back-end processes remain siloed, limiting perceived improvement from the citizen perspective (Lee, 2025).

Within this state of the art, a prominent strand of research examines e-government service quality and its downstream effects on citizen satisfaction, trust, and continuance of use. Empirical work consistently reports that service quality variables especially those reflecting reliability, responsiveness, and user experience shape satisfaction and can mediate trust outcomes. At the same time, the literature indicates unresolved gaps that motivate the present study: first, the tendency to measure “digital service quality” narrowly (e.g., speed and availability) while underweighting governance-related dimensions (e.g., transparency, privacy safeguards, and procedural fairness); second, limited integration of adoption and post-adoption perspectives (initial acceptance versus sustained use and satisfaction); and third, underdeveloped hybrid/omnichannel explanations even though citizens frequently traverse multiple channels during one service journey.

To address these gaps in a theoretically grounded manner, this review positions the study around three complementary theories that are widely used to explain service quality perceptions, technology-enabled interaction, and satisfaction formation in post-adoption contexts. The first is SERVQUAL, popularized by A. Parasuraman and Leonard L. Berry (both affiliated with Texas A&M University, United States) and Valarie A. Zeithaml (affiliated with Duke University, United States) in 1988 through their development of a multi-item instrument for measuring perceived service quality. SERVQUAL conceptualizes quality as a gap between expectations and perceived performance, operationalized through dimensions commonly articulated as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Vitálišová et al., 2024). In digital administration, “tangibles” translate into interface quality, system appearance, and platform functionality cues. SERVQUAL is valuable for this study because it anchors the concept of “quality determinants” in citizen perceptions and provides a structured basis for identifying which dimensions of the service experience most strongly shape satisfaction, particularly in settings where citizens compare promised convenience with lived complexity.

The second theory is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), popularized by Fred D. Davis at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), United States, initially articulated in his 1985 MIT thesis and later formalized in *MIS Quarterly* in 1989 (Apriza & Tomy, 2025). TAM explains technology acceptance primarily through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which influence attitudes and intentions to use technology. For digital public services, TAM frames a key part of the satisfaction puzzle: even if a service is “available,” citizens may not experience it as useful (e.g., if it fails to reduce effort) or easy (e.g., if navigation is confusing), undermining both satisfaction and continued utilization. TAM also supports diagnosing why certain citizen segments especially those with lower digital literacy may experience diminished benefits, thereby aligning with equity-focused concerns that frequently surface in digital government debates (Novak et al., 2024).

The third theory is the Expectation–Confirmation Model of Information Systems Continuance (ECM-ISC), popularized by Anol Bhattacharjee at the University of South Florida, United States, in

2001 (MIS Quarterly). ECM-ISC adapts expectation–confirmation logic to post-adoption behavior, emphasizing that users (AlQurashi et al., 2025) form satisfaction after comparing expected performance to experienced performance (confirmation/disconfirmation), and that satisfaction and perceived usefulness drive continuance intention (Nasution et al., 2024). In digital administration, ECM-ISC is especially relevant because many government platforms struggle not only with attracting first-time users but also with maintaining continued use and trust after initial experiences. By modeling satisfaction as a post-use evaluative mechanism, ECM-ISC provides a clear path for linking service quality determinants (what citizens experience) to sustained engagement and broader legitimacy outcomes (Shams et al., 2025).

These three theories align with the study’s main problem why digitalized government services do not consistently translate into higher public satisfaction because they illuminate different but interlocking mechanisms. SERVQUAL clarifies which perceived service quality dimensions citizens use to judge performance relative to expectations (Trippner-Hrabi et al., 2024). TAM explains whether citizens cognitively evaluate digital services as helpful and manageable, shaping willingness to engage in the first place. ECM-ISC explains how satisfaction is formed after use and why it becomes pivotal for continued use, which is crucial in digital government contexts where repeated interactions (renewals, updates, follow-up, complaints) are common.

The development of these theories also mirrors the evolution of public service delivery toward digital ecosystems. SERVQUAL has been extended into electronic service quality measurement, including E-S-QUAL, developed by A. Parasuraman (University of Miami, United States), Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Arvind Malhotra (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States) in 2005, which adapts service quality measurement to web-based service environments. This development is directly relevant for public services delivered via portals and apps, where efficiency, fulfillment, and privacy/security cues become central quality signals (Malik et al., 2025). Similarly, TAM has been extended and synthesized within broader acceptance frameworks; for example, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) integrates multiple acceptance models and is presented in MIS Quarterly (2003) as an effort to consolidate determinants of technology use. For ECM-ISC, later work further elaborates continuance as a distinct theoretical domain, emphasizing post-adoption determinants and contextual influences on sustained use (Pınarcı & Göçoğlu, 2025). These evolutions collectively support the study’s intent to focus on contemporary determinants such as usability, reliability, responsiveness, transparency, and privacy confidence that matter in today’s digital administration.

Connecting theory to the identified research gap, the literature suggests that digital public service studies often under-integrate service quality measurement with technology acceptance and post-adoption satisfaction formation (Özer, 2025). As a result, determinant models can become incomplete: they may identify usability issues without explaining how those issues alter usefulness beliefs (TAM), or they may measure satisfaction without modeling expectation confirmation and continuance implications (ECM-ISC). The present study is positioned to bridge this gap by linking service quality determinants to both cognitive evaluations (usefulness/ease) and post-use satisfaction mechanisms, producing a more holistic explanatory model aligned with digital-hybrid service journeys (Chapman, 2024).

In line with this theoretical integration, the study’s problem formulation can be expressed as an inquiry into how citizens evaluate satisfaction across the end-to-end journey of digital public services and which determinants platform quality, process quality, and governance quality most strongly shape that satisfaction (Witkowski, 2024). Research questions naturally follow from the combined theories: how citizens’ perceived service quality dimensions (SERVQUAL/E-S-QUAL) predict satisfaction; how perceived usefulness and ease of use (TAM) condition satisfaction and willingness to engage; and how confirmation of expectations and perceived usefulness after use (ECM-ISC) explain satisfaction and the propensity to continue using digital public services. These questions support the study objectives of evaluating satisfaction levels, identifying the strongest determinants of perceived quality, and producing actionable priorities for service improvement across channels (Priyowidodo et al., 2024).

The theoretical, academic, and practical benefits of this literature-based framework are clear. Theoretically, integrating SERVQUAL, TAM, and ECM-ISC advances a more complete explanation of satisfaction in digital administration by combining perception-based quality judgments, technology

evaluation beliefs, and post-adoption satisfaction formation. Academically, the model supports more robust construct operationalization and enables comparative testing across service types and citizen segments. Practically, it helps governments identify high-leverage interventions: improving clarity and consistency in processes to strengthen confirmation; optimizing usability to raise ease-of-use beliefs; enhancing reliability and responsiveness to elevate perceived service quality; and strengthening privacy/security and transparency cues to reduce perceived risk and improve satisfaction.

A literature-grounded conclusion emerges from these three theories and their expert formulations. SERVQUAL underscores that citizens judge quality through perceived gaps between expectations and experiences, which is amplified in digital contexts where promised convenience is salient. TAM emphasizes that digital reforms will not raise satisfaction if citizens do not perceive digital services as useful and easy, particularly for less digitally skilled groups. ECM-ISC clarifies that satisfaction is an *ex post* evaluative mechanism shaped by confirmation and usefulness, making it central for continuance and sustained public value generation. Together, these theories justify the study's novelty direction: a more integrative determinant framework that treats digital service quality not only as technical performance but as a citizen-centered, governance-aware, and journey-based construct capable of explaining satisfaction outcomes and informing credible reforms in the digital administration era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to evaluate public satisfaction with government services and to analyze the determinants of service quality in the era of digital administration, consistent with the article focus "Evaluation of Public Satisfaction with Government Services: An Analysis of Service Quality Determinants in the Digital Administration Era." A qualitative method is appropriate because the core constructs of satisfaction, perceived quality, and digital service experience are inherently interpretive and shaped by context, expectations, and meaning-making processes. Digital public services are experienced through end-to-end service journeys that include online interfaces, back-office verification, and hybrid support channels (e.g., call centers and service counters) (Nalavwe & Chibomba, 2025). Capturing why citizens feel satisfied or dissatisfied, which aspects they consider "quality," and how these perceptions form across multiple touchpoints requires in-depth inquiry beyond numerical ratings alone.

The research design is an embedded single-case study with a service-journey orientation. The case study design is selected to enable a holistic, real-world examination of digital public service delivery as an administrative ecosystem, where platforms, organizational processes, and governance arrangements jointly shape outcomes (Ferdous, 2025). An embedded structure is used because the study examines multiple service units and touchpoints within the same governance setting (e.g., information provision, application submission, verification, tracking, and complaint handling), allowing the analysis to compare determinants of satisfaction across stages of the journey (Cepiku et al., 2024). This design supports analytical generalization by linking observed patterns to a theoretically informed framework of service quality determinants relevant to digital administration, rather than aiming for statistical generalization.

The study location is the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (DKI Jakarta), Indonesia, focusing on provincial-level and city-level public service delivery units that provide high-volume administrative services through digital channels and hybrid service points. Jakarta is selected for three reasons. First, it represents a mature and highly utilized digital administration environment in Indonesia, where citizens frequently interact with online portals and mobile-based services for routine administrative needs. Second, its demographic and socioeconomic diversity provides variation in digital literacy, service expectations, and access conditions, which is important for examining how satisfaction and perceived service quality differ across user groups (Shimada-Logie & Konishi, 2024). Third, Jakarta offers organizational complexity and multi-agency coordination typical of metropolitan governance, making it a suitable setting to identify determinants of service quality related not only to interface performance but also to cross-unit process integration, timeliness, transparency, and complaint responsiveness dimensions that directly align with the study's title and central problem (Shkilniak et al., 2024).

Participants are selected using purposive and maximum-variation sampling to capture diverse experiences and perspectives. In this study, "respondents" refer to citizen service users who provide

experiential accounts of service quality and satisfaction, while “informants” refer to government actors and related stakeholders who can explain service processes, governance arrangements, and implementation realities. The citizen respondents consist of 24 individuals who used at least one government digital service within the last six months. To ensure heterogeneity, the sample includes frequent users (e.g., citizens who used digital services more than three times in six months), occasional users (one to two uses), and users who experienced at least one service disruption (e.g., failed submission, repeated verification, delayed status update). Pseudonyms are used to protect identity while enabling analytic traceability: “Rafi” (private-sector employee), “Ayu” (small-business owner), “Dewi” (university student), “Bima” (ride-hailing driver), “Sari” (full-time caregiver), “Tono” (retiree), “Lina” (civil society volunteer), and others representing comparable profiles. The rationale for selecting these respondents is to capture variations in expectations, digital capability, time sensitivity, and vulnerability to procedural complexity factors that strongly condition perceived service quality and satisfaction in digital administration.

The key informants include 15 stakeholders involved in service design, implementation, and frontline delivery. They comprise service managers, digital platform administrators, IT and data governance staff, complaint-handling officers, and frontline staff supporting hybrid service points. Examples of informant pseudonyms and roles include “Mr. Arman” (Head of Service Innovation Unit), “Ms. Nadia” (Digital Platform Product Owner), “Mr. Hendra” (IT Infrastructure and Security Officer), “Ms. Rika” (Complaint Management Supervisor), “Mr. Surya” (Frontline Service Counter Coordinator), and “Ms. Maya” (Service SOP and Quality Assurance Analyst). These informants are selected because they have direct responsibility for service standards, operational performance, cross-unit coordination, and citizen feedback mechanisms. Their inclusion enables the study to connect citizen perceptions to organizational processes and governance constraints, thereby strengthening causal plausibility in identifying service quality determinants.

Data collection integrates three techniques to support triangulation. First, semi-structured interviews are conducted with all citizen respondents and informants. Interview protocols for citizens focus on the service journey: entry point (how the citizen found the service), task completion (submission, verification), clarity of requirements, time and effort costs, perceived fairness, privacy confidence, communication quality, and responsiveness to problems. Interview protocols for informants focus on service architecture, workflow, interoperability, performance monitoring, complaint resolution routines, and the governance of transparency, accountability, and data protection (Mollah, 2025). Second, non-participant observation is conducted at selected hybrid service points to document how digital processes translate into frontline interactions, including assisted service practices for citizens with limited digital literacy. Third, document analysis is performed on service guidelines and publicly available materials (e.g., service standards, procedural flow descriptions, user guidance, and complaint-handling procedures), enabling the study to compare formal service promises with lived experiences (Kang & Kim, 2025).

Data analysis follows a systematic thematic approach combined with framework analysis to ensure alignment with the study’s focus on “determinants” of service quality. Interview recordings are transcribed and coded in iterative cycles. Initial open coding identifies recurring issues (e.g., repeated verification, unclear status tracking, inconsistent information, perceived risk in data submission). Axial coding then groups these issues into higher-order themes reflecting determinants of perceived service quality in digital administration, such as usability and accessibility, reliability and system responsiveness, procedural clarity and timeliness, complaint-handling quality, and governance signals (transparency, accountability, privacy protection, perceived fairness) (Kártvedt, 2024). A theoretically informed framework is used at the interpretation stage to relate themes to the study’s conceptual foundation and to ensure the determinants are articulated as explanatory factors rather than descriptive categories only. Cross-case comparisons are conducted across service stages and participant profiles (frequent vs occasional users; high vs low digital literacy) to identify patterns in satisfaction formation and to isolate determinants that appear consistently influential (Brogard, 2025).

The technique for drawing conclusions is analytic inference through triangulation, pattern matching, and explanation building. Triangulation compares citizen accounts, stakeholder explanations,

observations, and documents to confirm or challenge emerging interpretations. Pattern matching evaluates whether the observed relationships such as satisfaction increasing when status updates are consistent, or dissatisfaction rising when complaint handling is slow align across data sources and participant groups. Explanation building is used to construct a coherent account of how specific determinants (e.g., procedural clarity, timeliness, and governance transparency) interact to shape satisfaction outcomes in digital administration (Ohemeng & Zaato, 2024). To strengthen credibility, the study applies member checking with a subset of participants to validate interpretive summaries, and peer debriefing among researchers to reduce confirmation bias. An audit trail documents coding decisions and theme development to support dependability and confirmability.

Ethical procedures include voluntary participation, informed consent, the right to withdraw, and anonymization of identities and organizationally sensitive information. Data are stored securely with restricted access, and reporting avoids details that could re-identify participants. The qualitative approach has inherent limitations, particularly regarding statistical generalization beyond the case setting; however, the study mitigates this through thick description, maximum-variation sampling, and theory-linked analytical generalization. Overall, this method is designed to produce robust, context-sensitive evidence on why citizens feel satisfied or dissatisfied with digital government services and which determinants of service quality should be prioritized to improve public value in the digital administration era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate why extensive digitalization does not automatically translate into higher public satisfaction, directly reflecting the article focus, *Evaluation of Public Satisfaction with Government Services: An Analysis of Service Quality Determinants in the Digital Administration Era*. Across the citizen interviews and stakeholder accounts, satisfaction was shaped less by the mere availability of online platforms and more by whether digital services reduced effort, delivered predictable outcomes, and signaled trustworthy governance. This pattern aligns with contemporary e-government research that emphasizes citizen experience, trust-related perceptions, and post-use satisfaction as central drivers of continued engagement rather than technology presence alone.

A first major finding concerns the “effort burden” of digital services. Many citizens described satisfaction as highest when digital channels substantially lowered time and procedural complexity such as enabling submission without repeated office visits and providing clear requirements upfront. Conversely, dissatisfaction arose when the platform shifted burdens onto citizens: repeated uploads, duplicated data entry, unclear error messages, and steps that required offline verification without transparent justification. In TAM terms, perceived usefulness was not a general belief that “digital is modern,” but a concrete judgment that the service saved time, reduced uncertainty, and improved control over the process. When usefulness was confirmed in practice, citizens described the experience as “worth using again”; when usefulness was ambiguous, they reverted to hybrid coping strategies such as seeking help from friends, visiting service points, or repeatedly calling hotlines. This resonates with broader evidence that perceived usefulness and ease of use remain fundamental in shaping acceptance and satisfaction in digital public service contexts.

A second finding highlights usability and accessibility as decisive determinants, but in a way that goes beyond interface aesthetics. Citizens with higher digital literacy tended to tolerate minor interface inconveniences if the back-end process was reliable and outcomes were predictable. In contrast, citizens with lower digital literacy evaluated usability as the availability of “guided pathways,” including step-by-step instructions, accessible language, and assisted support options when they got stuck. The practical meaning of “ease of use” therefore included both interface simplicity and the presence of human-enabled assistance within hybrid delivery. This extends the study’s gap argument: satisfaction is often formed across omnichannel journeys rather than within a single digital touchpoint, making channel integration and assisted service crucial components of perceived quality.

A third, highly salient finding involves reliability and status transparency. Citizens repeatedly associated satisfaction with the ability to track service progress in real time and to understand why delays occurred. When status updates were inconsistent or absent, citizens interpreted the service as unreliable even when the platform technically functioned. In SERVQUAL terms, reliability (delivering

promised service dependably) and assurance (confidence that the process is legitimate and competently managed) were strongly tied to the platform's communication design. Even when the system eventually produced the intended output, delayed or opaque progress information created dissatisfaction because citizens felt they lacked procedural control. This finding speaks directly to the main problem: the digital front-end may exist, but if the service journey remains opaque and fragmented, citizens perceive "digitalization without service improvement."

A fourth finding concerns responsiveness and complaint handling as "make-or-break" moments that disproportionately influenced satisfaction. Citizens reported that quick resolution of submission failures, clear explanations of rejections, and responsive complaint channels could restore satisfaction even after a negative incident. Conversely, slow responses, scripted replies, or ambiguous escalation pathways amplified dissatisfaction and reduced willingness to rely on digital channels in the future. This pattern is consistent with prior evidence that e-service quality influences satisfaction and that satisfaction can mediate downstream trust-related outcomes, underscoring that responsive support is not auxiliary but integral to perceived quality.

A fifth finding expands the determinants of service quality into governance signals: privacy protection, data security confidence, and perceived fairness were repeatedly invoked by citizens as reasons for satisfaction or discomfort. Several participants described reluctance to submit sensitive documents online unless they were confident about data handling, legitimacy of the portal, and safeguards against misuse. Others connected satisfaction to perceived fairness when requirements and decision criteria were clearly communicated and applied consistently. These governance-related determinants are central to the study's novelty direction, because many service quality models focus heavily on technical or process variables while underweighting how transparency, accountability, and privacy assurances shape satisfaction. Emerging e-government continuance research similarly shows that satisfaction and trust operate as key mechanisms linking service experiences to continued use, reinforcing the importance of governance cues in digital services.

A sixth finding addresses expectation–experience alignment across the service journey, which is best explained through the Expectation–Confirmation logic embedded in ECM-ISC. Citizens entered digital services with expectations shaped by government narratives about "fast, easy, transparent" service. Satisfaction was strongest when experiences confirmed those expectations particularly when outcomes were timely, requirements were stable, and status tracking reduced uncertainty. Dissatisfaction intensified when expectations were disconfirmed, such as when citizens encountered repeated verification steps, contradictory requirements across channels, or unexplained delays. Crucially, disconfirmation did not only reduce satisfaction; it also altered continuance intention: participants described a shift from "defaulting to digital" to "using digital only when forced," which is precisely the post-adoption dynamic emphasized in continuance models. Evidence from recent e-government continuance studies likewise highlights expectation confirmation and perceived usefulness as core predictors of satisfaction and continued intention to use.

These results answer the study's research questions by clarifying both the overall satisfaction pattern and the most influential determinants. Public satisfaction in digital administration emerged as conditional, not uniform: it was high when digital services delivered real effort reduction and predictable outcomes, moderate when platforms worked but processes remained opaque, and low when digital channels introduced new burdens without compensating benefits. The determinants that consistently shaped satisfaction were usability with assisted support, reliability with transparent progress tracking, responsiveness through effective complaint handling, and governance signals that reduce perceived risk and increase fairness perceptions. Differences across citizen groups were pronounced: low digital literacy participants were more sensitive to usability barriers and absence of assistance, while high digital literacy participants were more sensitive to interoperability problems, inconsistent information, and transparency gaps that signaled weak administrative integration.

The findings also clarify the practical implementation gap that motivated the study. Government stakeholders commonly framed digital services as "available" and "feature-complete," while citizens evaluated them as "complete only when the journey is complete." This mismatch reflects a back-

office integration gap: front-end portals often progress faster than interoperability, data-sharing arrangements, and standardized operating procedures across units. As a result, citizens experienced digital repetition submitting data online but revalidating offline, or receiving different instructions depending on channel. The study's contribution is to show that satisfaction determinants sit at the intersection of platform design, process redesign, and governance communication; improving one dimension without the others produces limited gains.

When the results are interpreted through the three theories together, a coherent explanatory account emerges. SERVQUAL explains that citizens judge service quality as a set of perceptual dimensions reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and digitally translated tangibles rather than as a technical checklist. TAM explains why citizens' beliefs about usefulness and ease of use determine whether digital services are experienced as valuable or merely as additional administrative work. ECM-ISC explains how satisfaction is formed post-use through expectation confirmation and how that satisfaction shapes continuance intention, which is critical because digital public services often require repeated interactions over time. Integrating these theories therefore addresses the study's theoretical gap: it prevents an overly narrow focus on interface features by showing how satisfaction is jointly produced by quality perceptions, cognitive evaluations, and confirmation dynamics across the service journey.

The findings directly support the study objectives. The evaluation component is achieved by articulating satisfaction as a journey-based outcome shaped by key moments: onboarding (finding information and understanding requirements), transaction completion (submission and verification), and post-transaction management (tracking, follow-up, complaints). The determinant analysis is achieved by identifying which factors most consistently explain satisfaction: effort reduction and clarity (usefulness), navigability and assistance (ease of use), dependable outcomes and transparent tracking (reliability and assurance), rapid and meaningful support (responsiveness), and governance signals that shape privacy confidence and fairness perceptions (assurance and procedural justice). The mapping of improvement priorities follows logically: interventions that reduce disconfirmation such as consistent requirements across channels, clear rejection rationales, and predictable timelines are likely to produce disproportionate satisfaction gains because they improve both perceived quality and expectation confirmation.

The theoretical, academic, and practical benefits of the study follow from this integrated explanation. Theoretically, the results strengthen digital administration scholarship by demonstrating that citizen satisfaction is not adequately explained by technical performance alone; governance-related determinants and expectation confirmation mechanisms are indispensable, supporting calls in the literature to treat satisfaction and trust as central drivers of digital government outcomes. Academically, the study offers an empirically grounded structure for operationalizing determinants in future research, particularly by distinguishing platform quality, process quality, and governance quality and by situating these within a journey-based satisfaction formation model. Practically, the findings inform actionable reforms: improve usability with inclusive design and assisted support; strengthen reliability through stable workflows and real-time, accurate status updates; institutionalize responsive complaint handling with clear escalation and meaningful resolutions; and reinforce governance quality by communicating privacy protections, accountability mechanisms, and decision transparency in ways citizens can understand and verify.

In discussion with prior research, the study both confirms and extends prevailing conclusions. It confirms that e-service quality is a strong predictor of citizen satisfaction and that satisfaction plays a pivotal role in sustaining engagement and shaping trust-related outcomes. It extends the literature by showing that, in practice, citizens treat transparency of progress and fairness of procedures as inseparable from "quality," meaning that service quality determinants in digital administration should be defined as socio-technical and governance-aware rather than purely technical. It also extends prior work by emphasizing hybrid and omnichannel reality: satisfaction is often produced across channel transitions, where inconsistencies and repeated verification can negate perceived improvements from digital interfaces.

Overall, the results and discussion converge on a central conclusion aligned with the study's novelty direction: digital administration improves public satisfaction only when it re-engineers service

quality in an integrated manner platform, process, and governance so that citizens experience confirmed expectations, reduced effort, and credible assurances of fairness and data protection. This conclusion connects the main problem (digitalization without proportional satisfaction gains), the research gap (partial and fragmented determinant models), the research questions (which determinants matter most, for whom, and across which service stages), the objectives (evaluation and determinant identification), and the intended benefits (theoretical integration, academic measurement development, and practical reform priorities). In the digital administration era, the decisive determinant is not the existence of a portal, but the extent to which the entire service journey becomes simpler, more predictable, more responsive, and more trustworthy from the citizen's point of view.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that public satisfaction with government services in the digital administration era is shaped primarily by citizens' end-to-end service journey rather than by the existence of digital platforms themselves. The core problem identified in the results digitalization that does not proportionally improve satisfaction occurs when technology adoption outpaces process integration and governance communication. Citizens evaluate whether digital services genuinely reduce effort, time, and uncertainty. Satisfaction rises when digital channels simplify requirements, streamline verification, and provide predictable outcomes; it declines when platforms relocate administrative burdens to citizens through repetitive data entry, unclear error feedback, fragmented portals, and offline revalidation without transparent justification. Thus, digital government is experienced as high quality only when it delivers practical convenience and procedural control in everyday interactions.

The determinant analysis confirms that the most influential factors cluster into three interdependent domains: platform quality, process quality, and governance quality. Platform quality is reflected in usability, accessibility, and the availability of guided pathways that enable diverse users including those with lower digital literacy to complete tasks without confusion. Process quality is reflected in reliability, timeliness, and cross-channel consistency, particularly through accurate status tracking and stable requirements that reduce repeated submissions and contradictory instructions. Governance quality is reflected in transparency, accountability cues, privacy and data protection confidence, and perceived fairness of decisions. The findings show that governance signals are not peripheral; they function as service quality indicators that strongly influence trust, comfort, and satisfaction, especially when citizens must submit sensitive personal data. The combined effect of these determinants clarifies why some digital reforms are perceived as "available but not helpful": improvements in interface design alone cannot compensate for opaque workflows, inconsistent standards, or weak complaint resolution.

Linking the results to the three theories used in the study strengthens the explanatory contribution. First, SERVQUAL-informed interpretation helps clarify that citizens judge quality through perceptual dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness, which in digital contexts are signaled by consistent requirements, dependable outcomes, and meaningful support when problems occur. Second, TAM explains why perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are decisive: citizens are satisfied when services demonstrably save time and reduce uncertainty, and when the interaction is manageable through clear guidance and assisted support (Walke & Winkler, 2024). Third, the Expectation–Confirmation perspective explains satisfaction as a post-use evaluation shaped by whether lived experiences confirm government promises of being "fast, easy, and transparent." When expectations are confirmed, satisfaction increases and citizens are more willing to continue using digital channels; when expectations are disconfirmed through delays without explanation or status opacity citizens shift toward reluctant or forced use, often returning to hybrid coping strategies (Nishimura, 2024).

These conclusions directly address the study's research questions and objectives. The evaluation of satisfaction indicates it is conditional and differentiated across user groups and service stages; the determinant analysis identifies the highest-leverage drivers of satisfaction; and the service-journey framing highlights where interventions should be prioritized. The study's novelty is reinforced by demonstrating that satisfaction in digital administration is best explained by an integrated model that combines technical experience, administrative process integrity, and governance assurances. This integration addresses the research gap in which digital service quality is often operationalized too narrowly and channel dynamics are underexamined. The findings show that key "moments of truth" occur not

only at submission but also during verification, tracking, and complaint handling, where transparency and responsiveness can either restore or erode satisfaction.

The implications are threefold. Theoretically, the study advances a governance-aware understanding of service quality determinants in digital public administration and positions satisfaction as a central indicator of public value in platform-mediated services. Academically, it provides a coherent basis for future measurement and comparative inquiry by distinguishing platform, process, and governance determinants within a journey-based model. Practically, the study recommends prioritizing (1) inclusive usability supported by assisted service options, (2) back-office integration that eliminates repeated verification and ensures consistency across channels, (3) reliable, real-time status communication that reduces uncertainty, (4) responsive complaint handling with clear escalation and actionable resolutions, and (5) visible privacy, security, and decision transparency measures that strengthen confidence and perceived fairness. Overall, public satisfaction improves when digital administration is implemented as service reform not merely as platform deployment so the entire journey becomes simpler, more predictable, more responsive, and more trustworthy from the citizen's perspective

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