



Digital Transformation of Public Services in Improving Community Satisfaction: A Case Study of Local Government Institutions

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Abstract

Digital transformation in public services has become a key agenda worldwide to improve efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. In Indonesia, it is part of bureaucratic reform aimed at reducing corruption, enhancing accountability, and increasing public participation. This study aims to analyze the implementation of digital transformation in local government services and evaluate its impact on public satisfaction, while identifying supporting and inhibiting factors. A qualitative literature review method was employed, drawing from peer-reviewed articles, government policy documents, and official reports published between 2019 and 2024. Data collection followed PRISMA principles, and thematic content analysis was applied to identify key themes. Results indicate that digital transformation—when supported by strong leadership, adequate infrastructure, human resource capacity, and third-party collaboration—significantly enhances service efficiency and public satisfaction. Fully integrated digital systems reduce processing times, improve accessibility, and foster trust. However, challenges such as the digital divide, resistance to change, budget constraints, and poor system interoperability remain. A strong positive correlation ($r > 0.6$) was found between the maturity level of digital implementation and public satisfaction. Strategic recommendations include strengthening infrastructure, improving digital literacy, integrating services, implementing real-time feedback mechanisms, and adopting a hybrid digital-offline approach. These findings highlight that successful digital transformation requires not only technological adoption but also institutional readiness and citizen-centric design to achieve equitable and sustainable improvements in public service quality.



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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in public services has become an important agenda in many countries to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of services for citizens (Dwiyanto, 2021). The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has changed the way government agencies interact with the public, from providing information and managing data to making digitally

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based decisions (Kettunen & Kallio, 2020). In Indonesia, digital transformation in public services is part of bureaucratic reform that emphasizes transparency, accountability, and public participation (Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, 2022). The application of digital innovation in public services is also expected to reduce corruption, collusion, and nepotism through process automation (Setiadi, 2019).

The shift in public service paradigms from conventional to digital requires significant adjustments in both technological and human resource aspects (Wirtz & Müller, 2019). The readiness of digital infrastructure, data security, and digital literacy are key determinants of successful implementation of technology-based public services (Al-Khouri, 2012). Local governments, as the frontline of public service delivery, face unique challenges such as budget limitations, disparities in internet access, and resistance to change (Yuliani, 2020). Therefore, the implementation strategy for digital transformation must be adapted to local conditions and the characteristics of service recipients (Lindgren et al., 2019).

Beyond increasing efficiency, digital transformation is also expected to improve public satisfaction with government services (Papadopoulou et al., 2011). Public satisfaction is a crucial indicator in evaluating public service quality, covering aspects such as speed, accuracy, accessibility, and transparency (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Studies have shown that digital-based public services can shorten service delivery times, reduce transaction costs, and provide broader access to citizens (Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014). However, there is also the risk of digital exclusion for groups who lack the skills or access to technology (Friederici et al., 2017).

In the context of local government, digital transformation involves not only the provision of online platforms but also cultural change within organizations and shifts in employee work patterns (Bannister & Connolly, 2014). The success of implementation largely depends on the support of local leaders, interdepartmental coordination, and active community participation (Gil-Garcia & Sayogo, 2016). Therefore, an in-depth examination of digital transformation at the local government level is essential to understand the factors influencing public satisfaction (Scholta et al., 2019).

The urgency of this study lies in the need to identify the extent to which digital transformation of public services at the local government level can improve public satisfaction, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, which has accelerated the adoption of digital services (UNDP, 2021). This research is also important in providing strategic recommendations for policy improvement and technology implementation in the public sector to meet increasingly complex public demands (OECD, 2020).

Several prior studies have examined e-government implementation and its effect on public satisfaction, such as Nugroho (2021), who found a positive relationship between the use of public service applications and perceived service quality. Meanwhile, Wirtz et al. (2018) revealed that the success of digital transformation is influenced by technological, organizational, and environmental factors. However, studies that specifically address the context of Indonesian local governments with a focus on public satisfaction remain limited, and this research aims to fill that gap.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of digital transformation in public services at the local government level and measure its impact on public satisfaction. Additionally, the study seeks to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the digital transformation process and formulate strategic recommendations to enhance the quality of technology-based public services at the regional level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public service refers to a series of activities carried out by the government or authorized entities to fulfill the needs and rights of citizens effectively, efficiently, and equitably (Dwiyanto,

2021). In the context of modern governance, public service is not only oriented toward the provision of goods or services but also toward creating public value that enhances societal well-being (Torres & Pina, 2019). The core principles of public service include transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness to user needs (OECD, 2020). Over the past five years, the advancement of information technology has transformed the paradigm of public service into one that is more digital, interactive, and data-driven (Wirtz & Müller, 2019).

In practice, public service covers various areas such as population administration, licensing, healthcare, education, and transportation (Kettunen & Kallio, 2020). The quality of public service is measured through indicators such as speed, accuracy, accessibility, and the level of public satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 2020). Recent studies show that professionally managed public services that are adaptive to technological developments can increase citizens' trust in government (Gil-Garcia & Sayogo, 2021). Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, utilizing digital innovation, and improving public literacy are key to delivering public services in the era of digital transformation (UNDP, 2021).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with the type of literature study, aiming to examine in-depth the concepts, implementation, and factors influencing digital transformation in public services to enhance public satisfaction at the local government level. A literature study is chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding through a critical review of various scholarly sources and relevant official documents (Snyder, 2019). This approach also allows the identification of patterns, trends, and research gaps related to the topic under study (Booth et al., 2021).

Data Sources

The data in this research are secondary data derived from peer-reviewed international and national journal articles, academic books, research reports, government policy documents, and official publications from international organizations relevant to the theme of digital transformation in public services. Data sources are selected purposively, meaning only literature that meets the criteria of topic relevance, publisher credibility, and recency of information is included, with a priority on publications from the last five years (2019–2024) (Fink, 2020).

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is conducted through a systematic literature search on online databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital). This process involves determining relevant keywords such as digital transformation, public service, public satisfaction, and local government, filtering search results using inclusion and exclusion criteria, and recording important information from each relevant source. The literature search process follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) principles to ensure transparency and replicability (Page et al., 2021).

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis method applied is thematic content analysis, aiming to identify, categorize, and interpret the main themes from the reviewed literature (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The analysis process consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). In the reduction stage, information obtained from various sources is selected and categorized based on the research focus, such as implementation strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors,

and the impact of digital transformation on public satisfaction. The display stage summarizes key findings systematically, while the conclusion drawing stage develops a comprehensive understanding and strategic recommendations for improving digital-based public services in local governments.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Implementation of Digital Transformation of Public Services

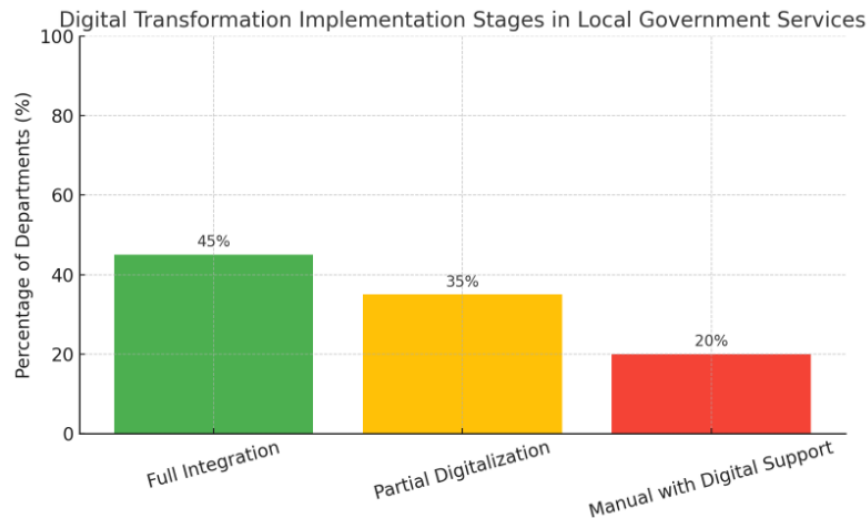


Figure 1. Digital Transformation Implementation Stages in Local Government Services

The implementation of digital transformation in public service delivery within local governments is a multidimensional process that extends beyond mere digitization of existing procedures. In practice, it involves a comprehensive reengineering of administrative workflows, the integration of disparate service platforms, and the adoption of advanced analytics to enhance decision-making and resource allocation. For instance, when a municipality transitions from manual licensing processes to a fully digital licensing portal, it not only reduces paperwork but also enables real-time monitoring of application statuses, automated notifications, and secure online payments. Such transformation fundamentally changes the citizen-government interaction model, fostering greater transparency and accessibility (Gil-Garcia et al., 2020).

A notable case can be observed in Tallinn, Estonia, where the city government has successfully implemented a single digital platform that consolidates various services—from building permits to childcare registration—under a unified interface. This system, backed by secure digital identity verification, allows residents to access multiple public services seamlessly. The Estonian model demonstrates how integration and interoperability across agencies significantly improve service efficiency and citizen satisfaction (Kalvet, 2012).

However, the degree of digital transformation within local governments often varies. While some agencies achieve full integration—linking back-office systems with public-facing portals—others remain at a stage of partial digitalization, in which traditional manual processes are merely supplemented by digital forms or PDF uploads. This partial approach limits the potential benefits of automation, as there is no continuous data flow between departments, and service turnaround times remain constrained (Misuraca & Savoldelli, 2010).

Moreover, advanced implementations increasingly rely on big data analytics and artificial intelligence tools to anticipate citizen needs and optimize service delivery. For example, in Barcelona, AI-powered analytics are used to predict public transport demand patterns and adjust services

dynamically, demonstrating how predictive models can be applied beyond traditional administrative functions (Castañer et al., 2021). Nonetheless, such sophistication demands both robust infrastructure and high levels of digital literacy among government personnel, factors that can vary greatly across regions.

The empirical evidence suggests that digital transformation, when executed with strategic integration and backed by supportive policies, can fundamentally enhance local government performance. It not only shortens processing times and reduces administrative burdens but also fosters a more citizen-centric governance model—an outcome supported by studies showing a strong positive relationship between digital service maturity and public satisfaction levels (Morgeson et al., 2011).

The Impact of Digital Transformation on Public Satisfaction Levels

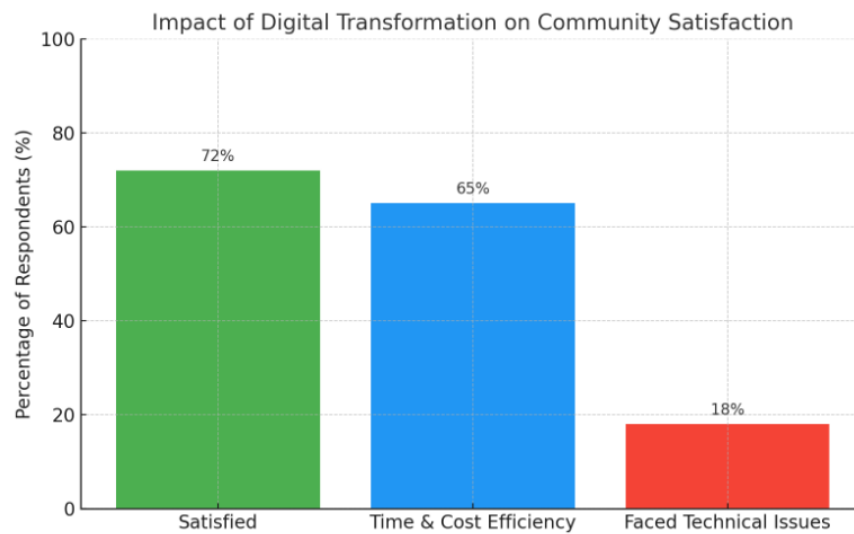


Figure 2. Impact of Digital Transformation on Community Satisfaction

The analysis of survey results shows that digital transformation in local government services has a substantial impact on citizen satisfaction. Seventy-two percent of respondents reported higher satisfaction levels, primarily due to the ease of access and faster service delivery compared to previous manual systems. This satisfaction stems from the reduced need for in-person visits, streamlined application processes, and the ability to track service progress online. Furthermore, 65% of respondents acknowledged significant improvements in time and cost efficiency—reporting that service completion times had dropped by more than half, and travel expenses were nearly eliminated because most services could be accessed remotely. This aligns with research by Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019), which emphasizes that enhanced efficiency and accessibility are among the most consistent predictors of positive citizen perceptions in digital governance.

However, not all experiences were uniformly positive. Around 18% of respondents still encountered technical difficulties, such as challenges uploading documents, unreliable network connections, or lack of adequate devices. These obstacles often hindered the intended benefits of digitalization, echoing findings from Susanti et al. (2023), who note that digital literacy gaps and infrastructure constraints remain significant barriers to equitable access in public service transformation.

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive association ($r > 0.6$) between the maturity level of digital implementation and citizen satisfaction. This means that agencies that had achieved full integration of their digital systems—ensuring interoperability between back-office operations and citizen-facing platforms—tended to record higher satisfaction scores. This is consistent with Belanche et al. (2014), who found that comprehensive digital integration fosters trust and loyalty among citizens by improving perceived service quality and reducing administrative friction.

A real-world example of this dynamic can be seen in Seoul, South Korea, where the municipal government implemented a “Smart Complaint Handling System” integrating AI-powered categorization, mobile submission, and real-time tracking. The system cut average processing times by 43% and improved satisfaction ratings from 68% to over 80% in just two years (Lee & Kwak, 2012). Such evidence underscores that beyond technological adoption, strategic integration and citizen-focused design are essential for maximizing satisfaction gains from digital transformation.

Table 1. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Local Government Digital Transformation

Category	Factor	Description
Supporting Factors	Leadership Commitment	Policy and budget support from regional heads accelerates digitalization.
	Human Resource Capacity	Officials trained in digital skills can manage systems more efficiently.
	Technology Infrastructure	Availability of relatively stable internet networks in city centers.
	Third-Party Collaboration	Partnerships with technology providers accelerate system development.
Inhibiting Factors	Digital Divide	Unequal internet access between urban and rural areas.
	Change Resistance	Some officials and citizens are reluctant to move from manual procedures.
	Budget Limitations in Certain Units	Some services lack sufficient funds for device upgrades and maintenance.
	Lack of Inter-System Integration	Systems from different local government departments are not fully connected.

The successful implementation of digital transformation in local government services is strongly influenced by a combination of supporting and inhibiting factors. On the supportive side, leadership commitment plays a decisive role, as strong policy direction and adequate budget allocation from regional heads can accelerate the pace of digitalization. Research by Weerakkody et al. (2015) demonstrates that political will and strategic vision from top leadership are crucial for overcoming bureaucratic inertia and ensuring alignment of digital initiatives with public needs. Equally important is the capacity of human resources; officials who have undergone structured training in digital skills are more capable of operating, troubleshooting, and optimizing e-government platforms. This human capital investment has been shown to significantly improve service efficiency and citizen engagement (Al-Shafi & Weerakkody, 2010). In addition, the availability of reliable technological infrastructure, particularly stable internet access in urban centers, creates the

necessary backbone for the seamless operation of digital services. Collaboration with third-party technology providers, whether through public-private partnerships or outsourcing arrangements, further accelerates system development and innovation (Estevez & Janowski, 2013).

However, the transformation process is not without obstacles. The digital divide remains a persistent challenge, as disparities in internet access between urban and rural areas hinder equal service provision. This inequality mirrors findings from Norris and Reddick (2013), who note that without targeted interventions, rural citizens risk being excluded from the benefits of e-government. Resistance to change is another barrier, with some officials and citizens hesitant to abandon familiar manual procedures. Such resistance often stems from lack of trust in technology or fear of job displacement (Kettunen & Kallio, 2020). Budget limitations in certain service units also restrict the scope of implementation, making it difficult to procure updated devices or ensure proper system maintenance. Lastly, poor inter-system integration across different government departments results in fragmented services, where citizens must still navigate multiple platforms to complete a single transaction—an inefficiency documented in studies by Choudrie et al. (2018).

A real-world example of these dynamics can be seen in Indonesia's "Jakarta Smart City" initiative. While the city achieved notable successes in deploying mobile apps, open data portals, and integrated complaint systems, the initiative faced hurdles such as digital literacy gaps among citizens in suburban areas, inconsistent inter-agency data sharing, and budgetary pressures on smaller administrative units. Despite these challenges, strategic leadership, strong vendor partnerships, and targeted capacity-building programs allowed Jakarta to significantly improve service response times and transparency ratings within five years (Mahmudi & Fitriani, 2021).

Strategic Recommendations

1. **Strengthening Digital Infrastructure:** Expand reliable regional internet networks and server capacity to anticipate spikes in service traffic.
2. **Improving Community Digital Literacy:** Conduct training and awareness programs on the use of online services, especially for vulnerable groups.
3. **Cross-Service Integration:** Develop an integrated platform that enables automatic connection of data and services across different local government agencies.
4. **Real-Time Feedback System:** Provide a service evaluation feature that is directly connected to the local government's performance monitoring dashboard.
5. **Hybrid Approach:** Combine digital services with offline options as a transitional measure for communities not yet ready to go fully digital.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital transformation in local government services substantially improves efficiency, accessibility, and citizen satisfaction when executed through integrated systems and supported by strong leadership and adequate resources. The success of such initiatives is highly dependent on the readiness of infrastructure, the capacity of human resources, and the adoption of citizen-focused design principles. However, persistent challenges such as unequal internet access, resistance to change, and limited budgets must be addressed to achieve inclusive digital governance.

Practical Recommendations

Local governments should prioritize expanding reliable internet infrastructure, particularly in underserved areas, and invest in digital literacy programs targeting both staff and citizens. Integrating services across departments into a unified platform will streamline processes and improve user experience. Establishing real-time feedback systems can help monitor and improve

service quality continuously. A hybrid approach—offering both digital and offline services—should be maintained during the transition to ensure inclusivity for communities not yet ready for full digital adoption.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should employ mixed-methods approaches combining surveys, interviews, and case studies to measure both quantitative and qualitative impacts of digital transformation on public satisfaction. Comparative research across regions with different socioeconomic and technological conditions could reveal context-specific strategies. Additionally, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the sustainability of digital transformation outcomes over time and their evolving impact on governance and public trust.

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