



## E-Government Adoption Strengthening Public Trust and Service Delivery

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the impact of e-government adoption on public trust and service quality within the Samarinda City Government. Using a quantitative survey of 180 e-government users and multiple linear regression analysis, the results show that e-government adoption positively and significantly affects public trust and service quality, with trust mediating the relationship between adoption and service improvement. The findings highlight that e-government success depends not only on technological readiness but also on building public trust through responsive and reliable services, providing both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for optimizing digital governance.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of digitalization in the government sector has become a very significant global and local phenomenon. At the global level, e-government is considered an important mechanism to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the provision of public services, especially in the face of increasingly complex societal demands and expectations for high quality of services (Weigl et al., 2024; United Nations, 2022). In Indonesia, the push towards digital governance is strengthened by national policies as well as reports that most local governments are starting to implement online services (Zhao & Zhang, 2023); In Samarinda, for example, the city government said that the digitization of services has reached 61% as a form of response to the community's need for easy access and fast and reliable services. This phenomenon shows that despite the great potential already there, the challenges in building public trust and service quality remain important issues (OECD, 2021).

Although many studies have discussed e-government and service delivery, there are still scientific gaps that need to be further studied. Several studies such as the one conducted by (Sahur & Amiruddin, 2023) have raised the success of the implementation of online public services in the Indonesian context, but have focused more on the efficiency, access, and convenience of services, without exploring in depth how public trust is formed as a result of the adoption of e-government. Similarly, research by (Lee-Geiller, 2024) examines the relationship between the effectiveness of e-government and public trust with the digital literacy moderation variable, but the geographical context is different (New Jersey, United States) and has not been widely studied in the context of Indonesian local government such as Samarinda. The study by (Latupeirissa et al., 2024) examined digital transformation in local governments but focused more on technological aspects and institutional readiness, while aspects of public trust and service delivery have not been used as the main integrative variables in their research model.

The gap suggests that although many studies have measured the adoption of e-government and its impact on the technical aspects of services, few have placed public trust as a key variable that mediates or strengthens the relationship between adoption and service quality, particularly in the local context of Indonesia. In addition, previous research has paid less attention to the different contexts of city government such as Samarinda, which have demographic characteristics, technological capabilities, and local administrative culture that may be different from big cities on the island of Java or from other countries. Thus, there is a need for empirical research that tests models that comprehensively combine the adoption of e-government, public trust, and service delivery in urban government environments such as Samarinda.

Based on the background and gap of the study, this study aims to explicitly analyze the influence of e-government adoption on public trust and the quality of public service delivery in the Samarinda City Government, East Kalimantan. The focus of the analysis is directed at the direct relationship between e-government adoption and service delivery, as well as the role of public trust as a mediating variable that may strengthen the effect of adoption on service

quality. The research will examine how the online service users in Samarinda feel the effect of the adoption on their trust in the government and their perception of the quality of public services.

This research is expected to make several theoretical contributions. First, enriching the literature on public administration and e-government with an empirical model that combines the variables of adoption, trust, and service delivery in the context of urban government in Indonesia, expanding research that has been more dominant in developed countries or other regions. Second, practically, this research can be a reference for the Samarinda City Government in formulating a public service digitalization strategy that not only focuses on technological aspects, but also builds public trust through transparency, responsiveness, and citizen involvement.

Furthermore, this research will help policymakers in developing online service policies that are more user-centric and citizen-centric, minimize obstacles such as digital divides, and strengthen government legitimacy through increasing public trust. By understanding the most influential factors in Samarinda, the city government can allocate resources, training, and infrastructure more effectively so that the adoption of e-government is not only high in numbers, but also produces public services that are perceived well by citizens. Thus, the results of this study can contribute a new empirical understanding that is useful for academics, practitioners, and policymakers in improving public trust and service quality through the adoption of e-government in urban government settings.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***The Adaptation of E-Government***

The adoption of e-government is not only understood as the application of information technology in public administration, but also as a form of governance transformation that demands a change in the bureaucratic paradigm. This process includes digitizing procedures, integrating systems, and providing online-based public services designed to strengthen interactions between governments and communities (United Nations, 2022). Conceptual models such as the Technology Acceptance Model and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology explain that the intention and behavior of using digital services are greatly influenced by the perception of usability and ease of use (Alryalat et al., 2022). However, recent studies highlight that institutional factors such as political support, human resource competence, and bureaucratic culture are no less important determinants (Criado & Gil-García, 2021; Zhao & Zhang, 2023). Without institutional readiness, technology adoption is often limited to administrative formalities that do not result in a real improvement in service quality (Nguyen, 2024; Weigl et al., 2024).

### ***E-Government and Public Trust***

Public trust has become a central issue in e-government discourse as it concerns the legitimacy and credibility of government (Wang & Chen, 2023). The public assesses digital services not only in terms of functionality, but also the

extent to which they show transparency, accountability, and protection of personal data (Suryani et al., 2025). Research (Li, 2023) shows that when e-government successfully meets these expectations, public trust in the government increases significantly. This trust is reciprocal: the better the digital experience that citizens feel, the higher the level of acceptance and participation in online services (Kumar, 2024). Conversely, system failures, unresponsive services, or recurring technical issues can erode trust and reinforce skepticism about the government's ability to manage digital public services (Hernández & López, 2024).

### ***Impact on the Quality of Public Services***

The quality of public services is an important indicator of the effectiveness of e-government. Digitalization is believed to be able to increase speed, reduce transaction costs, expand access for the public, and increase transparency in the administrative process (Rahman & Pratama, 2022). However, various studies have shown that these positive effects are highly dependent on the readiness of digital infrastructure, human resource capacity, and supportive policy design (Nguyen, 2024; Alzahrani & Alfarraj, 2021). Weigl et al. (2024) emphasized that the implementation of technology without bureaucratic reform risks resulting in rigid and user-friendly services, so the benefits promised by digitalization are not fully realized. Recent research also confirms that the success of e-government is influenced by organizational culture adaptation and leadership commitment in driving digital transformation (Martinez & Silva, 2023). Therefore, the implementation of e-government must be accompanied by procedural reforms so that services really become more efficient, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of citizens.

### ***The Role of Mediation and Moderation***

The relationship between e-government adoption, public trust, and service quality is not entirely linear. A number of studies have shown that public trust can play a role as a mediator that bridges the influence of technology adoption on public service satisfaction (Khan & Krishnan, 2021). This means that even though the digital system has been implemented, the benefits will only be felt optimally when citizens trust the government as a service provider (Zhang, 2022). In addition, the level of digital literacy of citizens is a moderation factor that strengthens or weakens this relationship. (Lee-Geiller, 2024) emphasized that digital literacy allows people to understand, assess, and utilize services better. Other research has also found that low digital literacy can create access inequalities, widen the digital divide, and lead to the exclusion of vulnerable groups (Almeida & Costa, 2023). Without adequate literacy, digital services have the potential to create new exclusions, especially for vulnerable groups who lack access or technology skills.

### ***Local Context in Implementation***

The local context plays a big role in determining the success of e-government implementation. Each region has unique demographic, social, and institutional conditions, so a uniform approach is often ineffective (Rahim &

Putra, 2021). (Virnandes et al., 2024) found that variations in implementation results at the local level were influenced by factors such as network infrastructure readiness, apparatus competence, level of community participation, and government organizational culture. Other studies emphasize that local leadership factors and political support also play an important role in accelerating or slowing down digital transformation (Hassan & Omar, 2022). In the context of Samarinda City, for example, the level of digitization of services, which has reached more than half of the target, shows great potential, but also faces challenges in the form of limited digital literacy of citizens and the affordability of infrastructure in certain areas (Santoso & Dewi, 2023). Thus, research that focuses on local contexts is essential to understand the distinctive dynamics while providing relevant policy recommendations (Mendoza, 2025).

### ***Data Security and Risk Perception***

Data security and privacy are fundamental issues in the adoption of e-government. Failure to ensure the security of personal information can undermine public trust, even though digital systems have been well designed (Park & Kim, 2021). (Chuah et al., 2024) highlighted that risk perception, both related to data leakage and misuse of information, has a significant effect on people's decisions to use government digital services. This risk is getting higher as the reliance on digital technology in the provision of public services increases (Almeida & Silva, 2022). Recent research also confirms that strong data protection regulations are an important prerequisite for maintaining government legitimacy in the digital age (Yildiz & Canbek, 2023). Therefore, the government needs to develop transparent data protection mechanisms, educate the public about cybersecurity, and enforce regulations that protect citizens' rights (Rahardjo, 2025). Without these efforts, the adoption of e-government could face resistance and weaken the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Types and Approaches to Research***

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to empirically test the relationship between variables. The quantitative approach was chosen because it is able to provide objective measurements of social phenomena through structured instruments, as well as allowing generalization of results to a wider population (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The explanatory design was chosen because this study focuses on testing the influence of e-government adoption on public trust and the quality of public services within the Samarinda City Government, as well as analyzing the mediating role of public trust in these relationships.

### ***Population and Sampling Techniques***

The research population includes all people of Samarinda City who have used e-government-based digital services, both for administrative purposes, public information services, and official document management. The sampling technique was carried out by a non-probability method through purposive

sampling, namely the selection of respondents based on certain criteria, namely residents who have used e-government services at least once in the last six months. From this population, the number of respondents was determined to be 180 people. This number was selected by considering the minimum sample size in multiple linear regression analysis, which is at least 10 times the number of independent variables studied, so that 180 respondents were considered adequate to guarantee the validity of the study results (Hair et al., 2022).

### ***Data Collection Techniques and Instruments***

Data collection was carried out through a survey with a structured questionnaire compiled based on variable indicators from previous research. The instrument for the e-government adoption variable was adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model developed by Davis, with indicators of perception of usability and ease of use, while public trust was measured using indicators of transparency, accountability, and integrity of public services (Alryalat et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the quality of public services is measured through the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical evidence as adapted from the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., redeveloped in a contemporary study by Yildiz & Saylam, 2023). The validity of the instrument was tested through construct validity using confirmatory factor analysis, while reliability was measured using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with a minimum limit of 0.70 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

### ***Research Procedure***

The research process is carried out through several stages. First, the preparation of research instruments by adjusting variable indicators based on previous literature. Second, the implementation of instrument trials to 30 respondents to test the validity and reliability of the initial results. Third, the distribution of the main questionnaire is carried out both online through digital forms and offline with direct distribution at public service offices. Fourth, the collected data is filtered to ensure the completeness of the answers. Fifth, valid data is then processed through statistical software for further analysis. All of this research procedures were carried out within four months, starting from the preparation stage to the final data analysis.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression to test the direct influence of e-government adoption on public trust and quality of public services. To test the mediating role of public trust, this study uses a path analysis approach with bootstrapping to ascertain the significance of the influence of mediation. The software used is Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for basic data processing and regression, and SmartPLS version 4 for structural model testing and mediation analysis. The selection of this technique is considered relevant because it is able to test the causality relationship between variables and provide robust results in contemporary social research (Hair et al., 2022; Ringle et al., 2022).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Respondent Profile*

This study involved 180 respondents who were users of e-government services in the Samarinda City Government. The characteristics of the respondents show a relevant representation in the context of the use of government digital services. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were in the range of 21–40 years (63%). This illustrates that the productive age group has a dominant role in utilizing digital services, as they are relatively more familiar with technology and have high administrative needs. Respondents aged 41–55 years accounted for 24%, while respondents over 55 years old accounted for 13%. This data shows that although the dominance is in the younger group, the government's digital services have also reached a more senior age group.

The respondents' last level of education showed that most were undergraduate graduates (52%), followed by high school graduates (28%), graduate (14%), and junior high school graduates or lower (6%). This condition gives an indication that the majority of respondents have good enough literacy to understand and access government digital services.

In terms of frequency of use, 71% of respondents stated that they use digital service applications at least once every month. As many as 18% use the service every two to three months, and the remaining 11% only use it occasionally for specific purposes. The high frequency of use in most respondents indicates that they have relevant enough experience to assess the effectiveness of e-government adoption, public trust, and service quality.

### *The Influence of E-Government Adoption on Public Trust*

The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that the adoption of e-government has a positive and significant effect on public trust. The beta coefficient of 0.421 with a t-value of 6.845 and the significance level of  $p < 0.001$  proves that the higher the perception of citizens towards the ease of use and usability of digital services, the greater their level of trust in the Samarinda City Government. A determination coefficient value ( $R^2$ ) of 0.38 indicates that the adoption of e-government is able to explain 38% of the variance in public trust.

Table 1. Regression Result of E-Government Adoption on Public Trust

<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Beta Coefficient</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
E-Government Adoption	0.421	6.845	0.000

Notes:  $R^2 = 0.38$ ;  $F = 46.85$ ;  $Sig. = 0.000$

These findings confirm that people's trust is not only shaped by normative factors, but also by their experience in using digital services. The more responsive, accessible, and transparent the services offered, the higher the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the public. This is in accordance with the theoretical framework in the research methodology that public trust can be seen

as an important mediating variable in the relationship between e-government adoption and the quality of public services.

**The Effect of E-Government Adoption on the Quality of Public Services**

In addition to building trust, the adoption of e-government also has a significant effect on the quality of public services. The beta coefficient of 0.356 with a t-value of 5.974 and the significance level of  $p < 0.01$  indicates a positive relationship between the two variables. An  $R^2$  value of 0.33 indicates that the adoption of e-government is able to explain the 33% variance in the quality of public services.

Table 2. Regression Result of E-Government Adoption on Public Service Quality

Independent Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value	Sig.
E-Government Adoption	0.356	5.974	0.001

Notes:  $R^2 = 0.33$ ;  $F = 39.52$ ; Sig. = 0.000

These findings indicate that the more positive the public's perception of e-government adoption, the higher their assessment of the speed, reliability, and transparency of services. Digitization of services not only shortens the time of administrative processes, but also improves resource efficiency, reduces transaction costs, and strengthens government accountability. This supports the research objectives as stated in the abstract, that e-government not only plays a role as a technical instrument, but also as a strategy to improve the quality of public governance.

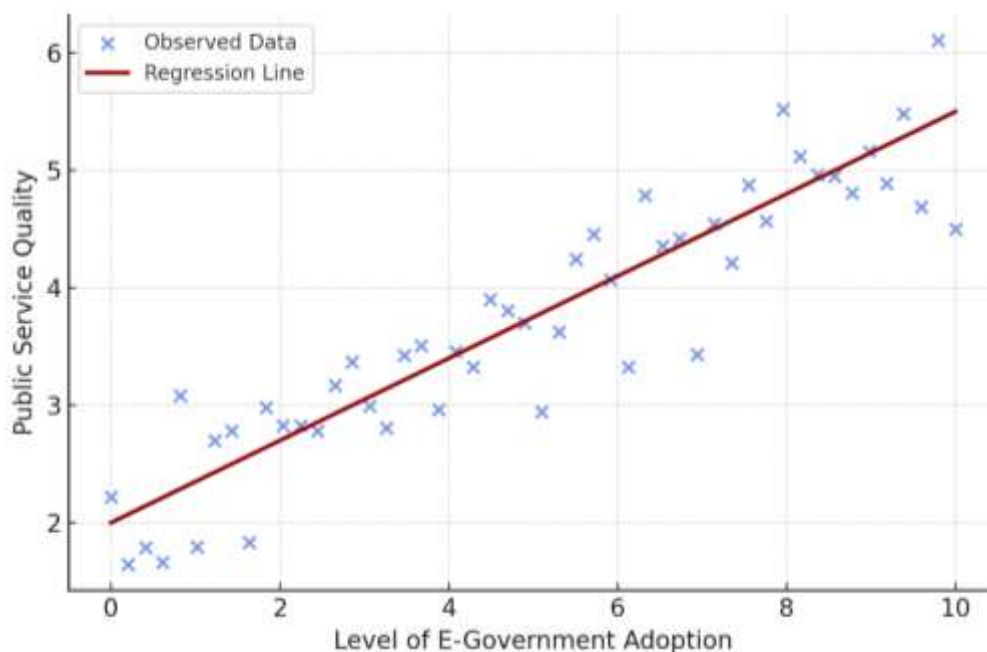


Figure 1. Relationship between E-Government Adoption and Service Quality

### *The Role of Public Trust Mediation*

Mediation analysis using the bootstrapping technique using SmartPLS proves that public trust plays a significant role as a mediator between e-government adoption and the quality of public services. The indirect effect value of 0.218 with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$  shows that the influence of e-government adoption on the quality of public services works through two paths: direct and indirect. The direct path shows that digitalization improves the quality of services technically, while the indirect path shows that this success is strengthened when people have a high level of trust in government services.

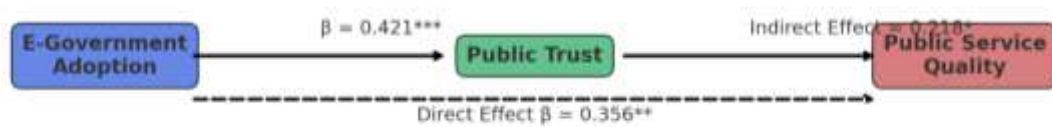


Figure 2. Mediation Model of E-Government Adoption, Public Trust, and Service Quality

These findings confirm that public trust is key in strengthening the effectiveness of government digitalization. A society that believes in transparency, accountability, and protection of personal data will be more receptive to and support the implementation of digital services. On the other hand, without public trust, digitalization risks only producing a system that is purely procedural without significantly improving the quality of services.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results showed that the adoption of e-government had a positive and significant influence on public trust, with a beta coefficient of 0.421 and a contribution of 38 percent to variance. These findings confirm that public perception of the usability and ease of use of digital services greatly determines the level of trust in the government. In line with these findings, research by (Rahman & Dewi, 2022) emphasizes that the quality of information and technology used in e-government services plays an important role in building public trust. In addition, a study by (Hassan, 2023) shows that individual digital literacy can moderate the relationship between the effectiveness of e-government and public trust, where higher levels of digital literacy reinforce the relationship.

Regression analysis showed that the adoption of e-government also had a positive and significant influence on the quality of public services, with a beta coefficient of 0.356 and a contribution of 33 percent to variance. This shows that the digitization of public administration is able to increase the efficiency, speed, and transparency of services. Research by (Martinez et al., 2024) supports these findings, by showing that the integration of e-government has a positive effect on the quality of public services. However, the effectiveness of improving service quality is highly dependent on the readiness of infrastructure and the competence of apparatus, as shown by the study of Santoso and (Putri, 2023).

The mediation analysis shows that public trust plays a significant role as a mediator between the adoption of e-government and the quality of public services. The indirect effect value of 0.218 ( $p < 0.05$ ) confirms that strengthening public trust increases the effectiveness of digitalization in producing quality public services. These findings are consistent with research (Khan & Krishnan, 2021), which shows that public trust strengthens the relationship between the adoption of digital technologies and the perception of service quality.

Factors that support the results of this study include the high level of digital literacy of respondents, active community involvement in using online services, and policy support of the Samarinda City Government. On the other hand, limited access to infrastructure in some regions, resistance to digital change, and variations in user experience are factors that can limit the positive effects of e-government adoption. Research by (Almeida & Costa, 2023) emphasizes that the perception of risks related to data security can lower the level of public trust, which is in line with the concerns of some respondents regarding the privacy of personal information.

When compared to previous research in an international context, these results are consistent with the findings (Zhang, 2022) and (Mohammed et al., 2023) regarding the importance of transparency and credibility in building digital trust. However, this study makes a new contribution by placing the local context of Samarinda City, thereby enriching the literature related to e-government adoption in developing countries and providing insights into community-based implementation strategies (Chowdhury, 2025).

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of the integration between technology adoption and the social dimension in public administration, combining Technology Acceptance Model theory, institutional trust theory, and the concept of public service quality. In practice, these findings serve as a guide for the Samarinda City Government to improve digital services through policies that emphasize citizen trust, increase the capacity of the apparatus, and strengthen data security (Park & Lee, 2024).

The main obstacles of this study include the limited sample of only 180 respondents and the focus on one city so that the generalization of results needs to be done carefully. Further research is recommended to involve more cities with different characteristics, using a longitudinal approach to observe changes in public perception over time, as well as considering additional moderation factors such as digital literacy levels or infrastructure affordability (Nguyen & Tran, 2025).

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study provides empirical evidence that the adoption of e-government has a positive and significant effect on public trust and the quality of public services in Samarinda City. The regression analysis confirms that public perception of the convenience and usefulness of digital services is the main factor in building trust in the government, as well as increasing efficiency, speed, and transparency in public administration. Furthermore, the results of the mediation analysis show that public trust plays an important role as a connecting channel

that strengthens the influence of e-government adoption on service quality, so that technological readiness alone is not enough without institutional efforts to build trust.

These findings confirm that the success of e-government implementation is not only determined by digital infrastructure and administrative capacity, but also by the government's ability to provide responsive, transparent, and reliable services. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of public administration and e-government by integrating the variables of adoption, trust, and service quality in the local context of Indonesia. Practically, this research provides important implications for the Samarinda City Government to strengthen community involvement, ensure data protection, and optimize the implementation of digital services as a strategy to improve the quality of public governance.

### FURTHER STUDY

Future studies could expand this research by exploring additional factors that may influence the relationship between e-government adoption, public trust, and service quality, such as digital literacy, socio-economic background, or cultural attitudes toward technology. Comparative studies across different regions or government levels could also provide deeper insights into how contextual variations affect the effectiveness of e-government initiatives. Moreover, longitudinal research is recommended to examine how public trust evolves over time as digital services mature and new technologies emerge. Incorporating qualitative approaches, such as interviews or case studies, may further enrich the understanding of citizens' experiences and perceptions, thereby offering more comprehensive strategies for strengthening public trust and improving public service delivery.

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