

Digital Governance and Public Policy Effectiveness: The Mediating Role of Citizen Engagement in Improving Public Service Quality

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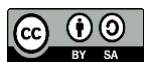
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ABSTRAK

Transformasi digital memberi pemerintah ruang yang lebih luas untuk memperbaiki kebijakan, memperkuat partisipasi warga, dan meningkatkan mutu pelayanan publik. Namun, manfaat tersebut tidak muncul secara otomatis. Keberhasilan tata kelola digital sangat bergantung pada sejauh mana warga dilibatkan secara nyata dalam proses pemerintahan. Penelitian ini menelaah hubungan antara tata kelola digital dan efektivitas kebijakan publik, sekaligus melihat bagaimana keterlibatan warga dapat memperkuat pelayanan publik. Kajian dilakukan melalui studi kasus kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Informasi diperoleh dari pejabat pemerintah, penyedia layanan, pemangku kepentingan, serta masyarakat yang menggunakan layanan digital, lalu dianalisis untuk menemukan pola dan tema utama. Temuan penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa tata kelola digital tidak berhenti

pada penggunaan teknologi untuk memperbarui administrasi. Perubahan tersebut turut memengaruhi cara lembaga bekerja, hubungan antara pemerintah dan warga, serta proses pembentukan nilai publik. Digitalisasi administrasi, keterhubungan antarsistem, pemanfaatan data dalam pengambilan keputusan, dan penyediaan layanan secara daring membuat pelayanan lebih mudah diakses, terbuka, tanggap, dan efisien. Pada saat yang sama, ruang digital memungkinkan warga menyampaikan pendapat melalui konsultasi daring, mengajukan pengaduan, berkontribusi dalam crowdsourcing, terlibat dalam ko-kreasi, dan memberikan umpan balik secara berkelanjutan. Dengan demikian, warga tidak lagi hanya ditempatkan sebagai penerima layanan, tetapi juga sebagai pihak yang ikut membentuk dan mengawasi tata kelola pemerintahan.

ABSTRACT

The rapid transformation of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped public governance by creating new opportunities for governments to enhance policy effectiveness, citizen participation, and public service quality. Nevertheless, the implementation of digital governance does not automatically produce effective public policies, particularly when technological innovation is not accompanied by meaningful citizen engagement. This study aims to explore how digital governance contributes to public policy effectiveness and to examine the mediating role of citizen engagement in improving public service quality. Employing a qualitative research design with a case-study approach, data are collected through

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semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis involving government officials, public service providers, policy stakeholders, and citizens who use digital public services. Participants are selected purposively based on their knowledge and experience of digital governance and public service delivery. Data are analyzed thematically through systematic processes of data coding, categorization, theme development, interpretation, and triangulation. This study concludes that digital governance constitutes not merely a technological modernization of public administration but a fundamental transformation of institutional processes, government–citizen relationships, and mechanisms of public value creation. The findings demonstrate that the digitalization of administrative processes, integration of government information systems, data-driven decision-making, and expansion of digital public services contribute to greater accessibility, transparency, responsiveness, and efficiency in public governance. More importantly, digital platforms create new spaces for e-participation, online consultation, digital complaints, crowdsourcing, co-creation, and continuous citizen feedback, thereby transforming citizens from passive recipients of services into active participants in governance.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has emerged as a fundamental force reshaping contemporary public administration (Paola et al., 2026), extending beyond the mere adoption of information and communication technologies toward a broader transformation of governmental structures, processes, and relationships with citizens (Ninyuk et al., 2024). The evolution from traditional e-government to digital governance reflects a paradigmatic shift from the digitization of administrative procedures and online service provision toward an integrated, data-driven, participatory, and citizen-centered governance ecosystem (Ali et al., 2024; Asnur et al., 2024; Dewanto et al., 2023). Within this transformation, digital platforms increasingly facilitate multidirectional interactions between governments, citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders, thereby changing citizens from passive recipients of public services into active participants in governance processes. Digital technologies also expand opportunities for open government by improving access to public information (George, 2026), strengthening transparency and accountability, enabling real-time communication, and facilitating more accessible and responsive public services (Nugraha et al., 2025). Consequently, digital transformation should be understood not simply as technological modernization, but as an institutional and governance transformation that reconfigures how public organizations create public value, engage citizens, and respond to increasingly complex societal needs (Kurniawan & Kurnia, 2025).

Digital governance can enhance public policy effectiveness by integrating technological capabilities with institutional processes throughout policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (Ibrahim et al., 2025). The use of integrated data systems and analytical technologies enables data-driven decision-making, allowing policymakers to identify societal problems, recognize emerging trends, allocate resources, and evaluate policy outcomes on the basis of more timely and relevant evidence (Ichsan et al., 2023). At the same time, digital platforms can strengthen transparency and information disclosure, facilitate inter-agency coordination and data sharing, accelerate administrative processes, and improve governmental responsiveness to changing public needs. Digital feedback mechanisms - including online consultation, electronic complaint systems,

participatory platforms, and other forms of e-participation - can further provide governments with continuous information about citizens' experiences and policy preferences, thereby creating a feedback loop between policy implementation and policy adjustment. Nevertheless, technological adoption alone does not necessarily result in effective public policy (Griese et al., 2026). Its contribution depends substantially on institutional capacity, data quality and interoperability, digital inclusion, bureaucratic responsiveness, public trust, and the extent to which citizen feedback is meaningfully incorporated into decision-making. Therefore, digital governance becomes an effective policy instrument when technological innovation is accompanied by institutional transformation and meaningful citizen engagement, rather than when digitalization is treated merely as an end in itself.

Citizen engagement has become a central component of digital governance, reflecting a fundamental transformation in the position of citizens from passive recipients of government services into active actors who contribute to policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (Tabasum et al., 2024). Digital technologies have expanded the spaces through which citizens can interact with public institutions by enabling e-participation, digital consultations, online complaint systems, participatory platforms, and real-time feedback mechanisms (Firtin et al., 2026). These instruments allow governments to identify citizens' needs and preferences more rapidly while providing the public with greater opportunities to express concerns, propose policy alternatives, and evaluate government performance. More advanced forms of digital engagement, such as co-creation and crowdsourcing, further enable governments to mobilize citizens' knowledge, experiences, and collective intelligence in designing policies and public services. Citizen engagement should therefore not be understood merely as the availability of digital communication channels, but as an interactive governance process in which citizen input is acknowledged, processed, and translated into governmental responses and policy adjustments. Meaningful digital participation can consequently strengthen policy legitimacy, governmental accountability, responsiveness, and public trust, while creating a critical mechanism through which digital governance generates greater public value (Arslan et al., 2026; Diana et al, 2025)

Public service quality in the digital era is increasingly determined by the capacity of government institutions to provide services that are accessible, rapid, reliable, transparent, responsive, inclusive, and easy to use while remaining aligned with diverse citizen needs. Digitalization enables citizens to access information and administrative services across geographical and temporal boundaries, potentially reducing transaction costs, bureaucratic procedures, waiting times, and dependence on face-to-face interactions. However, high-quality digital public services require more than speed and technological availability; they also depend on system reliability, information accuracy, procedural transparency, user-friendly interfaces, data security, and the government's ability to respond effectively to complaints and changing public expectations (Chenxi & Lestari, n.d.). Inclusivity is

particularly important because disparities in internet access, digital literacy, disability accommodation, socioeconomic conditions, and technological infrastructure may create new forms of exclusion. Accordingly, public service quality should be evaluated from a citizen-centered perspective, emphasizing not only administrative efficiency but also citizens' actual experiences and the extent to which digital services solve their problems. In this context, integrating continuous citizen feedback into service design and improvement can transform digital public services from standardized administrative instruments into adaptive and responsive mechanisms capable of generating sustainable public value (George, 2026).

Previous studies demonstrate that digital transformation has substantially changed public governance by improving administrative efficiency, transparency, service accessibility, and government-citizen interaction. Pribadi (2024) found that the implementation of digital governance in Indonesian local governments is closely associated with organizational arrangements, transparency, and accountability, indicating that successful digital government requires institutional dimensions beyond technological infrastructure. Similarly, Jonathan et al. (2024) showed that digital transformation can support decentralized public governance by enhancing governmental efficiency, citizen participation and empowerment, public trust, and continuity of public administration. Research on Indonesian public institutions also indicates that digital transformation can contribute to public trust through the interaction of digital capability, governance, leadership, organizational partnerships, collaborative environments, and transparency. Collectively, these studies suggest that digital governance should not be understood merely as the digitalization of conventional administrative procedures; rather, it constitutes an institutional transformation in which technological capabilities, organizational arrangements, transparency, and citizen-oriented governance interact to generate better public outcomes.

Despite the growing body of literature on digital transformation in the public sector, existing studies have predominantly concentrated on the technological and organizational dimensions of digital government, including government technology adoption, digital readiness, e-government success, administrative efficiency, and the direct relationship between digitalization and citizen satisfaction. Such perspectives have generated valuable insights into the determinants and outcomes of public-sector digitalization; however, they tend to conceptualize technology adoption as a principal driver of improved governmental performance while paying comparatively limited attention to the social and participatory mechanisms through which digital governance produces effective policy and service outcomes. In particular, there remains insufficient qualitative understanding of how digital governance facilitates meaningful citizen engagement and how citizen participation is subsequently translated into policy responsiveness, implementation improvement, and higher public service quality. This limitation is important because the existence of digital platforms does not necessarily ensure meaningful participation, nor does citizen

participation automatically influence policy decisions. Therefore, further research is required to uncover the institutional processes, interactions, and feedback mechanisms connecting digital governance, citizen engagement, public policy effectiveness, and public service quality, particularly from the perspectives and experiences of both governmental actors and citizens.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with an exploratory case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of how digital governance contributes to public policy effectiveness and how citizen engagement operates as a mediating mechanism in improving public service quality. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study does not seek to statistically test causal relationships among variables, but rather to explore the experiences, perceptions, interactions, and institutional processes through which digital technologies reshape government–citizen relations and public service delivery. Research participants are selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in or experience with digital governance and public services, including policymakers, government officials, digital public service administrators, frontline public servants, community representatives, and citizens who use government digital platforms. Data are collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis, including policy documents, regulations, standard operating procedures, institutional reports, digital service records, and relevant public feedback. Data-source and method triangulation is employed to capture multiple perspectives and strengthen the credibility of the empirical evidence.

The collected data are analyzed using thematic analysis, involving data familiarization, initial coding, categorization, theme development, theme review, interpretation, and synthesis of relationships among emerging themes. The analytical process focuses particularly on digital accessibility, transparency and information openness, inter-agency coordination, government responsiveness, digital participation, citizen feedback, policy adaptation, and perceived public service quality. Rather than treating citizen engagement as a statistical mediator, this study conceptualizes it as a qualitative mediating mechanism through which digital governance facilitates citizen voice, consultation, participation, *co-creation*, and feedback and subsequently translates these inputs into governmental responses, policy adjustments, and service improvements. Research trustworthiness is ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, supported by data triangulation, *member checking*, peer debriefing, and an audit trail documenting analytical decisions. Ethical principles are maintained through informed consent, voluntary participation, participant anonymity, confidentiality, and secure management of research data. Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to develop an empirically grounded Citizen-Centered Digital Governance Mechanism explaining how and under what institutional conditions meaningful citizen engagement

enables digital governance to generate more effective public policies and higher-quality public services.

RESULT

Digital Governance as a Transformation of Public Administration

The findings indicate that the implementation of digital governance has substantially transformed administrative processes and public service delivery. Digitalization is no longer limited to converting paper-based documents or conventional procedures into electronic formats; rather, it involves a broader restructuring of administrative workflows that enables public services to become faster, more standardized, traceable, accessible, and responsive (Rajagukguk et al., 2026). Digital public services can reduce citizens' dependence on face-to-face interactions while minimizing administrative burdens, procedural complexity, and bureaucratic delays. This transformation reflects a shift from procedure-oriented public administration toward more adaptive, efficient, and citizen-centered governance. This finding is consistent with Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019), who argue that the public value of e-government is manifested through improved public services, enhanced administrative efficiency, greater government openness, and stronger interactions between governments and citizens. Accordingly, digital governance should be understood as an institutional transformation that reshapes not only technological infrastructure but also the ways in which public organizations organize processes and generate public value (Sadat et al., 2025).

A second important finding concerns the integration of digital platforms and government information systems, which has become a critical element of contemporary public administration. Integrated systems facilitate the exchange and utilization of information across organizational units and government agencies, thereby reducing administrative fragmentation, duplication of work, and dependence on conventional coordination mechanisms. Such integration can also strengthen inter-agency coordination by enabling relevant information to be accessed more rapidly during policy implementation and public service delivery. Consequently, digital transformation affects not only the external relationship between government and citizens but also the internal structure and functioning of bureaucracy by promoting information sharing, institutional collaboration, and coordinated decision-making. This finding supports the argument of Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019) that digital government can generate public value by strengthening administrative capabilities, communication, collaboration, and interactions among governmental and societal actors. Thus, system integration represents an institutional foundation for transforming fragmented administrative structures into more connected and collaborative governance arrangements.

The findings further reveal a significant transition from conventional public service delivery to digital public services, characterized by greater accessibility and a stronger orientation toward citizens' needs. Citizens are becoming less dependent on physical government offices because various administrative procedures, information services,

applications, complaints, and other forms of interaction can increasingly be accessed through digital platforms. This transition offers substantial opportunities to improve service accessibility, processing speed, transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of digital public services should not be evaluated merely by the number of applications, websites, or technological platforms established by government institutions. More importantly, their effectiveness depends on whether these technologies provide meaningful solutions to citizens' actual needs and improve their overall service experiences (Rajagukguk et al., 2026). From a public value perspective, technological innovation becomes meaningful when it produces substantive benefits for citizens rather than simply modernizing existing administrative procedures. This interpretation is consistent with the literature emphasizing that digital government should be oriented toward service improvement and public value creation rather than technological adoption as an end in itself (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019).

Another significant finding is the increasing importance of digital data in public decision-making processes. Digital governance generates substantial amounts of administrative data, service records, citizen complaints, public feedback, and other forms of digital information that can provide governments with a more systematic understanding of societal needs and emerging public problems. Within a *data-driven governance* framework, such information can support problem identification, policy prioritization, resource allocation, program monitoring, and evaluation of public service performance. The integration of digital data into policy processes therefore provides an opportunity to shift decision-making from predominantly bureaucratic and experience-based practices toward more evidence-informed and adaptive governance. However, the availability of digital data does not automatically produce better decisions. Its contribution depends on data quality, interoperability, institutional analytical capacity, information governance, and the ability of public organizations to translate data into policy action (Rahman et al., 2023). This demonstrates that the effectiveness of digital governance requires an appropriate combination of technological capability and organizational capacity rather than technological sophistication alone.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that digital governance represents an institutional and relational transformation rather than merely a technological change. Its most substantive effects can be observed through the interconnected transformation of administrative procedures, integrated information systems, data-informed decision-making, inter-agency coordination, and government-citizen relations. Digital platforms have created new opportunities for two-way communication through which citizens can express preferences, submit complaints, provide feedback, participate in consultations, and potentially become involved in the *co-creation* and *co-production* of public services (Firtin et al., 2026). Consequently, citizens are progressively repositioned from passive recipients of government services toward active participants in governance processes. This finding extends the public value perspective proposed by Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019) by

suggesting that the transformative potential of digital governance depends substantially on its capacity to institutionalize meaningful interactions between public institutions and citizens. Therefore, the success of digital governance should ultimately be assessed not merely by the sophistication of its technological infrastructure, but by its ability to transform bureaucratic procedures, institutional coordination, decision-making processes, and government-citizen relationships toward a more responsive, participatory, and citizen-centered model of public governance.

Transparency and Accessibility through Digital Governance

The findings indicate that digital governance has substantially strengthened citizens' access to public information, particularly by reducing spatial, temporal, and procedural barriers that traditionally characterized government information systems (Ibrahim et al., 2025). Through official websites, integrated service portals, mobile applications, open-data platforms, and other digital channels, citizens are increasingly able to obtain information concerning public services without relying exclusively on direct interactions with government officials. This increased accessibility is significant because access to timely, accurate, and comprehensible information enables citizens to better understand their rights, obligations, available services, and government decisions. Matheus et al. (2021) argue that digital transparency can provide citizens with greater visibility into governmental functioning, although effective transparency requires appropriate technological and institutional foundations. More recent empirical evidence also demonstrates that information accessibility and digital adoption can significantly contribute to administrative transparency and citizen trust (Ma, 2026).

A second major finding concerns the increased transparency of public service procedures and requirements. Digital platforms make it possible for public institutions to publish service requirements, administrative procedures, processing stages, expected completion times, and other relevant information in a standardized and publicly accessible format. This reduces citizens' dependence on informal information and discretionary explanations from individual public officials, thereby potentially limiting uncertainty and unequal access to administrative knowledge (Arslan et al., 2026). From the perspective of public-service transparency, the quality of disclosure is particularly important because transparency should be designed around the information needs of different service users rather than simply increasing the quantity of information published online. Research on *public e-services transparency* similarly emphasizes the importance of making relevant service information available according to users' needs and profiles (Hochstetter et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, Pribadi (2024) further demonstrates the close relationship among public organization, transparency, and accountability in digital government service implementation, suggesting that digital transparency is simultaneously technological and organizational in nature.

The findings further reveal that digital governance has expanded citizens' access to policy-related information, thereby creating greater opportunities for the public to

understand governmental priorities, regulations, programs, and policy implementation. The publication of policy documents, government data, program information, and institutional decisions through digital channels reduces the informational distance separating policymakers from citizens. This process is especially important because information asymmetry can weaken citizens' capacity to understand, evaluate, and participate meaningfully in public affairs. Open government data can therefore function not merely as a technical mechanism for disseminating datasets but as an institutional instrument for addressing information inequalities. Recent evidence indicates that open government data can mitigate information asymmetry in public-service provision and contribute to more equitable service outcomes (Zhang, 2026). Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2023) demonstrate that digital transparency can positively influence citizen participation in online crowdsourcing, suggesting that access to government information can also create conditions for more active citizen involvement in governance processes.

Another significant dimension of the findings relates to citizens' ability to monitor service processes and government performance. Digital service systems can provide greater visibility into application status, administrative progress, complaint handling, service outcomes, and, where appropriately disclosed, broader indicators of institutional performance. Such traceability changes the relationship between public institutions and service users because citizens are no longer entirely dependent on government officials to determine the status of their administrative requests. At the institutional level, publication of performance information, service standards, and government activities can also strengthen public scrutiny and accountability (Chenxi & Lestari, n.d.). Nevertheless, the existence of digital platforms does not automatically create substantive transparency. Matheus et al. (2021) emphasize that technological transparency tools must be accompanied by organizational and institutional arrangements that make information genuinely visible and useful to citizens. Evidence from Indonesia similarly suggests that transparency constitutes an important component through which digital government transformation can contribute to the generation of public trust (Jonathan et al., 2024).

Overall, these findings support the interpretative theme that digital platforms expand public access to government information and reduce information asymmetry between citizens and public institutions. Digital governance creates a more transparent informational environment by improving access to public information, clarifying service procedures, opening policy information, facilitating service monitoring, and increasing the visibility of government performance. However, the findings also suggest that digital openness should not be equated automatically with meaningful transparency. Information that is technically available but outdated, fragmented, difficult to understand, inaccessible to particular social groups, or disconnected from accountability mechanisms may have limited public value. This interpretation is consistent with Wahyuni et al. (2024), who highlight technology, transparency, and collaboration/integration as interconnected dimensions in Indonesia's digital government experience, and with Myeong and Kanzamanova (2026), who

demonstrate that digital participation becomes consequential when transparency is accompanied by institutional responsiveness and coherent trust.

Digital Platforms as New Spaces for Citizen Engagement

The findings indicate that digital platforms have emerged as important new spaces for citizen engagement, fundamentally transforming the relationship between public institutions and citizens. Traditionally, citizen participation in public governance was largely dependent on physical meetings, formal consultations, public hearings, and other institutionally structured mechanisms that were often constrained by geographical distance, time, administrative procedures, and unequal access to decision-making arenas (Rajagukguk et al., 2026). The development of government websites, mobile applications, social media, online consultation platforms, and digital complaint systems has expanded opportunities for citizens to communicate with government institutions more directly and continuously. These platforms enable citizens not only to access public information but also to articulate preferences, communicate problems, submit proposals, and respond to governmental programs and policies. Consequently, digital governance facilitates a transition from citizens as passive recipients of public services toward active participants in governance processes. This transformation is consistent with the concept of e-participation, in which information and communication technologies create new channels for citizen involvement in public decision-making and strengthen interactions between citizens and public institutions (Medaglia, 2012; United Nations, 2024).

A particularly significant finding concerns the growing role of digital consultation and online complaint mechanisms as institutional channels for citizen voice. Digital consultation enables government institutions to obtain citizens' perspectives on proposed policies, public programs, regulations, and service priorities without relying exclusively on conventional consultation mechanisms (Sadat et al., 2025). Similarly, online complaint platforms provide citizens with opportunities to report service failures, administrative delays, procedural difficulties, and other problems encountered when interacting with government agencies. These mechanisms potentially transform complaints from isolated expressions of dissatisfaction into valuable sources of administrative and policy information (Zulyusri et al., 2023). Citizen-generated information can enable governments to identify recurring service problems, recognize unmet public needs, and formulate more responsive interventions. However, meaningful engagement requires more than merely providing a technological channel for submitting complaints or opinions. The effectiveness of digital participation ultimately depends on whether governments acknowledge, process, respond to, and incorporate citizen input into administrative and policy decisions. As emphasized by Macintosh (2004), meaningful e-participation involves different levels of engagement - from providing information and consulting citizens to enabling more substantive participation in policymaking.

The findings further demonstrate that social media and interactive digital platforms have broadened the communicative dimension of citizen engagement by creating more

immediate and multidirectional forms of government–citizen interaction (George, 2026). Unlike conventional government communication, which is predominantly characterized by one-way information dissemination, interactive platforms enable citizens to comment on public issues, communicate directly with government agencies, share experiences, and collectively discuss public problems. Digital platforms may therefore function as spaces for dialogic governance, where public institutions can identify emerging concerns and obtain rapid feedback regarding policy implementation and service delivery. Zhao et al. (2023), for example, demonstrate that digital transparency can facilitate citizen participation through government crowdsourcing platforms, suggesting that transparent digital environments can create stronger opportunities for public involvement. Nevertheless, the existence of digital communication does not automatically produce meaningful democratic participation. Differences in digital literacy, internet access, institutional trust, and government responsiveness may determine who participates and whether such participation has substantive influence. Therefore, digital engagement should be assessed not simply by the volume of online interaction but by its inclusiveness, representativeness, deliberative quality, and actual influence on governmental action (Tabasum et al., 2024).

Another important dimension emerging from the findings is the development of co-creation and crowdsourcing as more advanced forms of digital citizen engagement. Whereas conventional participation often positions citizens as respondents to government-designed programs, co-creation allows citizens to contribute their knowledge, experiences, ideas, and resources to the design or improvement of policies and public services. Crowdsourcing platforms similarly enable governments to mobilize collective intelligence by soliciting ideas and potential solutions from a broader population (Griese et al., 2026). From this perspective, citizens possess experiential knowledge that can complement bureaucratic and professional expertise, particularly in identifying local problems and evaluating how public services function in everyday contexts. Linders (2012) conceptualizes this development as a movement from e-government toward forms of we-government, in which citizens increasingly participate in the production and improvement of public services (Tabasum et al., 2024). Digital platforms can consequently serve as institutional infrastructures for co-production and collaborative governance, potentially increasing the relevance, legitimacy, and responsiveness of policy interventions. However, these benefits depend on the government's capacity to establish clear participatory procedures and demonstrate that citizen contributions can produce observable policy or service improvements (Ibrahim et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings suggest that digital platforms should be understood not merely as technological communication tools but as emerging governance spaces in which citizen voice, institutional responsiveness, and public value creation intersect. Their transformative potential lies in creating a continuous feedback cycle through which citizens access information, communicate experiences, participate in consultations, submit complaints, propose solutions, and collaborate with public institutions (Sadat et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital governance constitutes not merely a technological modernization of public administration but a fundamental transformation of institutional processes, government-citizen relationships, and mechanisms of public value creation. The findings demonstrate that the digitalization of administrative processes, integration of government information systems, data-driven decision-making, and expansion of digital public services contribute to greater accessibility, transparency, responsiveness, and efficiency in public governance. More importantly, digital platforms create new spaces for *e-participation*, online consultation, digital complaints, crowdsourcing, co-creation, and continuous citizen feedback, thereby transforming citizens from passive recipients of services into active participants in governance. In this process, citizen engagement emerges as a critical mediating mechanism that translates technological capacity into substantive policy outcomes by connecting citizen voice with governmental responsiveness, policy adjustment, and continuous service improvement. Nevertheless, technology alone cannot guarantee effective public policy or high-quality services, as its impact depends on institutional capacity, digital inclusion, data integration, public trust, bureaucratic responsiveness, and the government's willingness to meaningfully incorporate citizen input into decision-making.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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