

“The Wadul Gus’e” as an innovation platform of digital public services compliant

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Abstract: This study analyzes the effectiveness of the “Wadul Gus’e” platform in improving the quality of public complaint service governance in Jember Regency, especially in terms of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of the local government. This study also evaluates public and government officials’ perceptions of the implementation of “Wadul Gus’e” as a public complaint instrument, and examines the sustainability of this innovation in the context of bureaucratic reform and public services. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data collection through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis of public complaint data and follow-ups available on the platform. The results of the study show that although “Wadul Gus’e” provides a direct communication channel between the public and the local government, the level of local government response to public complaints is still not all responded to where most complaints have not been followed up concretely and on time. The public’s impression is also divided between those who see “Wadul Gus’e” as a positive step towards openness, and those who are skeptical of its effectiveness in resolving public service complaints systematically. In terms of transparency and accountability, research data found that public complaints were not fully announced openly, so that the public was not sure about the government’s commitment to upholding the principles of good governance related to public complaints. Thus, “Wadul Gus’e” still faces significant challenges to be categorized as a sustainable innovation and not just a short-term political communication strategy.

Keywords: Wadul Guse, Public Service, Transparency, Accountability, Government Innovation, Jember Regency.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesia has been portrayed in the national and international media as a leader in trying to put open government principles into practice. This has been driven by an increasingly connected and well-informed society, and by the government’s efforts to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in order to meet its responsibilities towards its electorate (OECD 2016; Rokhman 2011). These efforts usually include the use of digital or ‘e-government’ technologies and platforms. Research on ICT implementation in Indonesian governance has primarily focused on technical aspects such as developing and evaluating e-government initiatives (Hermana and Silfianti 2011; Harijadi 2004) and e-government website functionality (Rahardjo, Mirchandani and Joshi 2007). Palvia and Sharma (2007) define e-governance as more than only website-based services from government organizations. Basu (2004) defines e-governance as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to connect individuals with public authorities and service providers, resulting in excellent governance procedures. Decentralization has resulted in innovative local government practices including e-budgeting and e-procurement, while public finance reforms strive to enhance openness and accountability. The Law on Freedom of Public Information (2008), the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (2008), and the Law for Public Service (2009) are other examples.

Since the early 1990s, the Indonesian government has emphasized the importance of e-gov, although the fact that many significant commercial actors in the private sector have adopted e-commerce, e-banking, or telemarketing technologies. The implementation of e-gov using Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2003 about the E-Government Development Strategy. In the era of government digitalization, improving public service governance has emerged as a strategic priority for promoting the development of an open, participatory, and community-oriented government. The central and re-gional governments must offer facilities that can respond to public desires and grievances quickly, transparently, and accountable. The National Public Service Complaint Management System (SP4N-LAPOR), used by numerous government agencies to bridge communication between the public and public service providers, is one of the national breakthroughs (Pratama et al., 2024). In accordance with this trend, the Jember Regency Government developed the "Wadul Guse" platform, as a public complaint system that allows residents to directly communicate their problems and desires to the Re-gent. This innovation is designed to prove the regional government's openness in responding to public needs and quicken the resolution of public service issues (Jatimnow, 2025). Conceptually, "Wadul Guse" serves as an alternate intermediary that reinforces the notion of responsiveness and the gov-ernment's immediate involvement to the community. Therefore how does the "Wadul Guse" program work

METHOD

This current research uses a descriptive qualitative method to gain a thorough understanding of the Wadul Guse program within the framework of public service governance in Jember Regency. Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2020) opted for a naturalistic approach that contextualizes the research process and results within social reality. This approach seeks to capture the meaning that develops from the interaction of society, bureaucracy, and digital complaint systems in order to analyze the dynamics of information technology-based public services. The case study was chosen because it was relevant to discuss the phenomenon in a real-life context and provide a broader understanding of the digital public complaint system (Yin, 2021). The informants in this study were selected purposively, based on certain criteria that were considered relevant to support the research objectives. The informants have been classified into three categories: (1) local government officials who have been involved in managing the "Wadul Guse" platform, such as officials from the Communication and Information Service, public service staff, or representatives of the Regent's work circle; (2) members of the community who have used "Wadul Guse," and (3) academics who have critical views on the platform's performance.

Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore perceptions, experiences, and evaluations from informants regarding the implementation and impact of the use of "Wadul Guse". Participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the use of the platform and the interaction patterns between the reporter, the system, and the officers who handle the report. Documentation studies have also been conducted on various relevant documents, such as complaint reports, agency responses, and related regulations. In order to ensure data validity, this study uses source triangulation, based on techniques, time, and data confirmation (member checking) with a number of informants.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which includes three main stages: (1) data reduction, through the process of simplifying and selecting field data to focus more on the main problem; (2) presenting data in narrative, matrix, and table form to facilitate interpretation; and (3) drawing conclusions and verification, where findings are tested continuously throughout the research process to maintain data consistency and validity. This research was conducted in a period of less than one month, with the following implementation schedule: the instrument preparation stage was conducted on 2–7 May 2025, field data collection took place on

8–15 May 2025, data analysis and interpretation were conducted on 16–17 May 2025, and report preparation and data validation were conducted on 18–19 May 2025.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The “Wadul Gus’e” Platform

The “Wadul Gus’e” is a digital platform for public complaints launched by the Jember Regency Government in March 2025 to facilitate direct communication between the citizens and the Regent. The platform is accessible through official WhatsApp and provides text-based complaint features, photographs, and real-time report status tracking. Based on data from Jember Regency Communication and Informatics Service (Diskominfo). Institutionally, the “Wadul Gus’e” program has been under the coordination of the Jember Regency Communication and Informatics Service as the main supporting agency. In its implementation, each Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) has a role as a technical implementing unit which has been responsible for complaints according to its authority. Each OPD assigns a special operator, who has been tasked with receiving, following up, and providing feedback on reports received through the “Wadul Guse” system. This scheme is intended to accelerate the coordination flow, strengthen sectoral accountability, and how to increase the effectiveness in responding to public complaints. However, despite the relatively high number of complaints, the effectiveness of the government's response to public complaints is still a major issue. The percentage of follow-up recorded in the system shows that only around 42% of the total complaints were resolved to the final stage. This phenomenon raises critical questions regarding the bureaucracy's commitment to responding to public complaints professionally. As part of its sustainability strategy, the Jember local government hopes to increase the system's capabilities by establishing and training complaint management operators at the village level. The plan tries to expand the reach of services, accelerate information dissemination, and bring the complaint management process closer to the grassroots community. Thus, “Wadul Gus’e” is expected to serve as both a communication channel and a tool for enhancing participatory and responsive local governance.

The Local Government Responsiveness to Public Complaints

Local government responsiveness is one of the main indicators in assessing the quality of public service governance. In Jember Regency, the presence of the “Wadul Gus’e” platform is positioned as a form of innovation in providing a digital-based public complaint channel. However, the effectiveness of this platform needs to be studied comprehensively, especially in terms of the government's response mechanism to public complaints. The speed, accuracy, and transparency in responding to public complaints have reflected the government's seriousness in resolving public aspirations. Based on the research findings, the “Wadul Gus’e”, allows the public to convey complaints directly. However, the government's consistency in resolving public complaints has not shown a systematic pattern

The research results found that a number of complaints had not received any clarity on their status, and some had not received any response at all. This condition gave rise to the perception that the presence of the platform gave the impression of forming a responsive image rather than building a substantive and sustainable complaint handling system. Therefore, it is necessary to review further whether “Wadul Gus’e” is a form of public service innovation or merely a political communication instrument. In a technical perspective, the “Wadul Gus’e” platform actually has the potential to be an effective bridge between the community and the local government. However, the absence of periodic performance indicator information such as average response time, number of complaints resolved, and level of community satisfaction weakens the accountability aspect of this system. The local government does not seem to have positioned public complaints as a strategic source of information for improving the quality of public services, but only for transparency.

Government responsiveness cannot be measured only from the existence of complaint channels, but from the entire complaint handling process, starting from receipt, verification, follow-up, and feedback to the complainant. In some cases, the public claimed not to receive information regarding the progress of handling their complaints. This lack of transparency shows the weakness of the complaint management system and the weak role of the technical unit in the field. Thus, it can be concluded that the responsiveness of the Jember Regency Government through the "Wadul Gus'e" platform is still superficial. Without a commitment to improve the complaint system and build a participatory and responsive bureaucratic culture to the needs of the community, the existence of "Wadul Guse" is at risk of being perceived as just an image tool. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation and measurable improvement policies are needed so that this platform can truly function as an effective and accountable public service innovation.

Transparency and Accountability in Handling Complaints

The "Wadul Guse" is one of the innovations in public complaint services initiated by the Jember Regency Government. Normatively, this platform promises open information and wider access for the public to submit complaints about public services. However, in practice, the implementation of "Wadul Gus'e" raises a number of issues related to its effectiveness in realizing the principles of good governance. Although technically, the public has been facilitated to submit complaints through social media and other digital channels, the public has not been able to transparently access information about the continuation of their complaints. This shows a gap between the system design and its implementation practices in the field.

In the transparency dimension, key indicators such as openness of complaint handling data, response speed, and the identity of the responsible agency, have not been systematically distributed to the public. There are also findings that some complaints only receive normative responses without explanations of progress or concrete follow-up. This phenomenon indicates that the openness of information in the Wadul Guse system is still partial and emphasizes symbolism rather than substance, so that the system has not been able to build public trust as a whole. Meanwhile, in the context of accountability, the research findings have not found data on structured and transparent evaluation mechanisms. This condition strengthens the criticism that this innovation tends to be on the image aspect, by forming the perception that the government is responsive, without being accompanied by a guarantee of measurable and accountable actions. Uneven responses, minimal follow-up reports, and the absence of indicators of successful resolution of public complaints, do not indicate that the process has been implemented systematically and responsibly.

In the future, the implementation of Wadul Guse requires a more strategic reformulation of the approach, through mapping the types of complaints based on their level of urgency and complexity. Public complaints have criteria, can be responded to quickly and directly, some require a time process and cross-sector coordination, and there are types of complaints that are informative or not worthy of being followed up. This mapping will also help the government allocate resources more efficiently and avoid the impression that complaints are filtered subjectively or even ignored. Therefore, a complaint categorization and prioritization system that can be accessed by the public is needed to ensure accountability and transparency. This gap also opens up space to compile a complaint classification table that can be used as a basis for compiling SOPs for handling, as well as a performance measurement tool for each related regional apparatus.

If this condition is not immediately corrected, there is a risk that the public complaint channel will only become an administrative formality without providing real contribution to improving the quality of government public services. Not

only does it hinder the development of a responsive culture, but it also creates public frustration with the performance of the bureaucracy that is supposed to serve.

Thus, the effectiveness of "Wadul Gus'e" in encouraging transparency and accountability of local government still requires critical evaluation and systemic improvement. Policy reformulation, improvement of reporting mechanisms, and integration of monitoring and evaluation systems that can be accessed openly by the public are needed. This allows the "Wadul Guse" to transform into a participatory and responsive social control instrument, and is able to meet community expectations for quality and integrated public services..

Table 1. Complaint Program Report on the “Wadul Gus’e” platform

No.	Public Compliant	Cimpliant Category	Local government Policy
1	Public street lighting that has been broken for almost 2 weeks and is endangering road users needs to be repaired	Normal	Issues for People’s Housing, Residential Areas and Local Public Works Agency
2	Public housing severely damaged due to strong winds/hurricane	Low	
3	Street vendors in Jember town square who are still selling are not orderly even though there are many signs stating "PROHIBITED"	Normal	The implementation of socialization and regulation of street vendors needs to be carried out in a humane manner towards street vendors who are still stubborn in carrying out their business activities in the Jember town square. This activity was carried out by 2 Satpol PP squads from the Jember district headquarters which aims to provide awareness to street vendors about the beauty, cleanliness and comfort for visitors to the Jember town square.
4	The provincial road has been damaged	High	Jember local government public works agency has been processing repairs to this provincial government road

5	Sumberpinang village has working hours starting at 10 am. But what about the fate of residents who come since dawn to complain, while the office is still empty and the service has not started?"	Low	Following up on residents' complaints regarding the indiscipline of the Sumberpinang Village Apparatus, Pakusari. This report was immediately responded to by the Inspectorate Team and the Pakusari Sub-district Head through a surprise inspection on May 6, 2025
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Source: Primary data from researchers that has been processed

Based on documentation of public complaints submitted through the Wadul Guse platform, several patterns can be identified to assess the effectiveness of government responses to citizens' concerns. In general, the types of complaints submitted by residents vary widely, ranging from basic infrastructure issues such as broken street lighting and damaged roads, to social concerns including the regulation of street vendors, natural disasters, and public service delivery at the village level.

One observable trend from the data is that complaints of a technical nature—those that can be addressed administratively, such as streetlight repairs—tend to receive relatively prompt and concrete follow-ups from the relevant technical agencies. This suggests a degree of structural readiness within the bureaucracy to respond to operational and routine issues. In contrast, complaints involving social dimensions or touching on bureaucratic ethics—such as the absence of village officials during working hours or delayed responses to disaster victims—often receive normative and procedural replies. In some cases, citizens are even redirected to submit reports through alternative channels, indirectly illustrating the platform's limitations as a one-stop public service mechanism.

Interestingly, a persuasive and educational approach appears to be employed in handling socially sensitive issues with the potential to spark horizontal conflict, such as the regulation of street vendors in public spaces. This strategy indicates that local authorities are beginning to adopt a more humanistic approach in exercising their regulatory functions, although the long-term effectiveness of such methods still requires further evaluation.

Overall, the data suggest that Wadul Guse has opened a new avenue for citizens to voice their concerns; however, the platform's capacity to ensure responsive and accountable governance remains in need of reinforcement. The disparity in responses between technical and structural complaints indicates that digital innovation alone has yet to fully address the deeper governance challenges—particularly those rooted in bureaucratic mindsets and power dynamics between citizens and the state.

Accordingly, Wadul Guse cannot yet be regarded as a fully effective instrument of social control, but rather as an initial stage in the transformation of bureaucratic culture towards more participatory and transparent governance. To enable the platform to function as a substantive democratic tool, there must be a strengthening of data transparency, integration of internal oversight systems, and institutionalization of evaluation mechanisms involving civil society actors.

Public Perception of the "Wadul Gus'e" Platform

The introduction of the "Wadul Gus'e" invention was viewed as an important turning point in trying to bring local government closer to its residents. This effort is a type of digitalization of public aspiration services intended to increase transparency and citizen participation in responsive governance. However, findings in the field indicate that public perception of the presence of "Wadul Gus'e" is very diverse. Some of the public interpret this platform as a representation

of the government's openness to criticism and aspirations of citizens. On the other hand, there is also an assessment that this platform is symbolic or merely a formality, without any local government commitment to resolve concrete and comprehensive complaints. Interviews and survey data suggest that the majority of respondents were knowledgeable about the existence of the "Wadul Gus'e".

However, active involvement remains low; among 2.61 million individuals in Jember Regency in 2024, only about 2,000 were users between March 14 and May 12, 2025. The low number of users indicates the innovation's low societal acceptance. Several reasons explain this, including a lack of public faith in the government's seriousness in responding to public complaints. The public at large are skeptical in the effectiveness of practical applications complaint resolution. Many citizens consider "Wadul Gus'e" to be the direct implementer or policy maker, despite the fact that this platform only serves as a bridge connecting the community with the local government and the local government with related technical services, depending on the scope of the complaint submitted. This wrong image creates excessive expectations of the platform, as the public expects "Wadul Gus'e" to keep through on all complaints quickly, but the procedure is dependent on the preparedness and responsiveness of each OPD or associated agency.

However, there are also publics who have given positive assessments to the existence of "Wadul Gus'e". Several respondents stated that this platform makes it easier to submit complaints, especially on technical issues such as infrastructure, administrative services, or environmental cleanliness. In several cases, the complaint reports that have been submitted received a quick response and concrete resolution. However, this success is still sporadic and does not reflect a consistent systemic performance pattern. Considering the diversity of perceptions that emerged, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of "Wadul Gus'e" as an instrument of public service innovation in Jember Regency is still ambivalent. On the one hand, this platform has great potential as a participatory medium in the governance process. However, on the other hand, structural and institutional challenges, such as the inequality of responses between OPDs and the public's lack of understanding of the working mechanism of "Wadul Gus'e", are the main inhibiting factors. Therefore, future efforts need to be focused on improving the quality of response, strengthening the capacity of cross-agency operators, and educating the public regarding the role and limits of authority of the "Wadul Gus'e" in a collaborative and decentralized public service ecosystem.

Evaluation of the institutional platform "Wadul Gus'e" and Sustainability of Innovation

The institutional evaluation of the innovative program "Wadul Gus'e" is a strategic step in determining the program's level of integration with the bureaucratic structure of the Jember Regency local government. Although this effort is presented as a type of public service innovation based on public complaints, the research indicates an issue of perception and unclear responsibilities among local government agencies working with the platform. This lack of integration produces a coordination gap between policy formulation and technical implementation in the field. The institution's unclear structure and task division has the potential to impede program implementation optimization and prevent the objective and systematic measurement of effectiveness.

The human resources dimension revealed that not all of the "Wadul Gus'e" implementing officials had received enough training, particularly in administering a digital-based public complaint system. A number of public complaints could not be processed immediately due to the apparatus's inadequate capacity and poor coordination among organizations. This research suggests that the success of public service innovation is dependent on more than just the use of digital technology; it also requires institutional preparation, which includes technical competence, honesty, and service dedication from the human resources involved.

The "Wadul Gus'e" program's resilience is vital, since there have been no legislation passed by local governments that clearly regulate this program as a permanent component of the local public service system. The significant dependence on existing local government figures suggests that this innovation is top-down and personalistic, rather than a long-term policy institutionalization process. This condition raises the possibility that the program will fail if local government changes without a vision for the continued success of this complaint service innovation. The monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of "Wadul Gus'e" is still informal and does not have systematic measurable performance indicators. The absence of a strong evaluation system complicates the process of analyzing the impact of the program, both in terms of public satisfaction and bureaucratic efficiency. In this context, the public considers this program as a political image, and not as a concrete solution to the structural problems of a slow and unresponsive bureaucracy. The sustainability and effectiveness of "Wadul Gus'e" as a public service innovation is needed. Local governments need to prepare comprehensive institutional arrangements. These efforts include the formulation of local government regulations that support the institutionalization of programs, continuous strengthening of the capacity of the apparatus, and the development of an evaluation system based on measurable and accountable performance indicators. Thus, "Wadul Gus'e" does not only function as a short-term project, but can develop into a sustainable innovation that is able to answer the needs of the community and strengthen responsive and participatory governance, and not just a practice of administrative populism.

Discussion: Between Digital Innovation and Compliant Public Service

The launch of the "The Wadul Gus'e" platform by the Jember Regency Government is seen as a digital innovation that aims to bring government public services closer to the community. This application allows citizens to voice their complaints and suggestions directly through their electronic devices. Conceptually, this initiative reflects the government's response to the demands of the community for open information and public participation in good governance. However, digital innovation cannot only be assessed based on the existence of the platform, but also the effectiveness and consistency of its implementation in solving real public problems. The public who voiced complaints with the "Wadul Gus'e" platform have not received provide and measurable follow-up. Some government responses are symbolic, such as offering unnecessary information answers without following up with real measures, giving the impression that this application is more of an image tool than an effective public service instrument. This situation raises significant questions about whether "Wadul Gus'e" really performs as a digital innovation or if it is simply part of the service terminology that shows the face of a modern bureaucracy without substance.

The use of information technology in public services should improve efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness. However, an assessment of the running of "Wadul Gus'e" indicates that there are still problems in internal governance, particularly in the coordination of local government entities in responsibility for resolving public complaints. The gap between the platform and the government bureaucracy has culminated in incorrect answers to public worries. This has the effect of lowering public trust in the government's commitment to enhancing the quality of complaint services. Public complaints through social media using the "Wadul Gus'e" platform as a digital innovation have been widely practiced but empirical evidence is difficult to access and verify. . If there is no transparent data and clear accountability of public service complaints, this digital innovation has the potential to produce a progressive political image of the local government.

Therefore, the effectiveness of the "Wadul Gus'e" application needs to be reviewed comprehensively, not only from the technological aspect, but also in the context of bureaucratic culture, human resource capacity, and the political courage of local governments to accept criticism and make improvements. Without critical evaluation and

structural improvements, the "Wadul Gus'e" platform risks widening the gap between community expectations and the reality of the services received, thus becoming a symbol of the paradox of innovation in local public service governance. The monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the performance of "Wadul Gus'e" is currently still informal and has not been equipped with systematic measurable success indicators. The absence of a strong evaluation system makes it difficult to measure the impact of the program on public satisfaction and service efficiency. Therefore, the public has the potential to judge this innovation only as a political image. The sustainability and effectiveness of "Wadul Gus'e" need to be done through institutional restructuring and formulating a policy framework that supports the institutionalization of this innovation. Adequate regulations, strengthening the capacity of the apparatus, and developing a comprehensive evaluation system are important prerequisites so that public service innovation does not stop as a temporary project. With this approach, public service innovation meets the needs of the community in a sustainable manner and avoids the practice of administrative populism.

CONCLUSION

The Wadul Guse program represents an innovative response to the limited public access to responsive, timely, and inclusive complaint mechanisms in Jember Regency. By utilizing digital platforms such as WhatsApp, this initiative has successfully repositioned the complaint space into a more personal and accessible domain. However, this innovation should not be interpreted merely as a technological transformation, but rather as a strategic effort to reconstruct the power relationship between the state and its citizens.

Critically, Wadul Guse reflects the political dynamics of public complaints at the local level, which are vulnerable to being co-opted as image-building tools for local leaders in the absence of transparent and participatory systems of oversight and evaluation. Weak supervisory mechanisms, the dominance of patron-client bureaucratic culture, and the low level of citizen participation in decision-making processes remain major challenges that must be addressed.

Therefore, the long-term success of Wadul Guse depends on several strategic efforts: (1) institutionalizing participatory evaluation mechanisms involving civil society actors; (2) decentralizing complaint channels to ensure accessibility for vulnerable groups; (3) reformulating complaint practices as an integral part of deliberative democracy; and (4) implementing regular and transparent data disclosure. Only through such a holistic approach can Wadul Guse evolve into a transformative instrument of equitable and democratic public service governance.

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