

# Government Preferences in the Implementation of Public Complaint Services: Social Media VS e-Government Applications

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**Keywords:** e-Government, Social Media, Public Complaint Services.

**Abstract:** This research aims to examine the preferences of agency service channels facilitating public complaints. It compared social media and e-government applications for public complaints. The data was collected through a survey focusing on government social media, including Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, and e-government applications, specifically Website, e-LAPOR, and SIPASADA. A total of 30 agencies were surveyed in South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The results showed that the agency usage of social media for public complaints services is twice as much as its usage of e-government applications. This finding can be a consideration for the government in determining which online public complaint service channels should be prioritized if the condition of its implementation resources is limited. This research was limited to online channels, few e-government applications, and social media. Further research can review the preferences of the government and citizens on an application that is run through various service channels.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Governments implement e-government applications to provide citizen services. In developing countries, e-government applications are generally designed by the government, either partially or completely (Kyakulumbye et al., 2019). Governments usually harness their experience in designing e-government applications that assumed to meet the needs of the citizens (Salman, 2018). However, the utilization and sustainability of the application is strongly influenced by the users (Nawafleh, 2018). The users consist of the government which also acts as an application manager (middle user), and the citizens as end users. On the government side, the adoption of e-government applications can only run optimally if the government has the ability to manage these e-government applications (Haneem et al., 2019). Meanwhile, adoption of these applications among citizens is still less desirable due to the lack of a social functionality with user-unfriendly language and content (Laenens et al., 2018; Van de Walle et al., 2018).

Technology acts as a social function, including social media, shifting the centralized government service model to a network model for citizen interaction (Aladwani & Dwivedi, 2018). Companies and governments use social media to increase citizens participation and collaboration (Al Islami et al., 2021; Alryalat et al., 2017). This advantage makes social media used as one of the public complaint service channels (Eom et al., 2018; Reddick et al., 2017).

In contrast to e-government applications designed by the government specifically for public complaints, social media is generally used by the government to provide information and requires strategies to encourage public complaints (Criado & Villodre, 2021). e-Government applications do not provide easy access for the citizens as well as provided by social media (Maulani & Lestari, 2020), but the use of social media as an alternative channel causes additional channels to be managed.

The use of multichannels to provide services to citizens must ensure the quality of the channels used (Russo et al., 2014). In addition, the government must also consider the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of multiple channels in public services (Tangi et

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al., n.d.). Thus, in the condition of limited resources needed to manage the multichannel public complaint service, government preference is needed in the selection of service channels, between e-government applications and social media.

Literature review showed that most of the research related to e-government and social media so far has focused more on the role of social media in e-government promotion (Adrees et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2017; Tursunbayeva et al., 2017) as well as e-services in e-government implementation (Khan et al., 2021; Vakeel & Panigrahi, 2018). Research on e-government and social media uses more individuals as subjects. In previous research, individual preferences from the citizen’s perspective were studied more (Bournaris, 2020; Sonnenberg, 2020; Wirtz & Kurtz, 2017, 2018). On the other hand, agency employees are also users acting as managers (Papa et al., 2017), and of course have their own preferences. However, there is a lack of research on agencies’ social media and e-government applications preferences; hence new insights are required to fill this gap.

This research determined the agency's preferences in public complaint services between interactive e-government applications and social media. It provided the agency’s overview in selecting service channels.

## 2 THE MATERIALS AND METHOD

This research applied a quantitative approach, using a survey to collect data. The subjects included 30 Regional Apparatus Agencies (OPD) of the South Tapanuli Regency. Regency governments have limited-service management resources due to low budgets and human resources. South Tapanuli Regency was selected for its good growth in the e-government index. The regency had a 2.64 e-government index based on the 2020 evaluation report on the Indonesian e-Government System (SPBE). This score increased to 2.87 for the regency's 2021 e-government index, as the second-best in North Sumatra Province. This index was better than the 2.24 national average e-government index in 2021. Public complaints services are among the services provided by the Electronic-Based Government System.

The object of this research includes electronic services by Regional Apparatus Organizations for public complaints through e-government applications and social media. In the social media category, the

objects surveyed are Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube, because all three are used in providing public complaints services. Meanwhile in the e-government application category, the object of research must qualify as an application that has embedded features that allow 2-way communication between application managers and end users. Based on these requirements, the surveyed applications are described in Table 1.

Table 1: e-Government applications.

Applications	Description
e-LAPOR	Information system as the main channel for public complaints services, general application of e-government used nationally
SIPASADA	The regional licensing services, featured with channel for public complaints related to licensing services. Managed by local government.
Agency website	Online applications for disseminating information on agency activities, featured with 2-way communication channel. Managed by local government in agency level.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The three e-government applications in Table 1 are organized in a website format, so they can also be referred to as e-government websites. The results showed differences in the number of owned and used applications for public complaints. This means that not every application in Table 1 is run by every agency and not every agency that runs this application uses it to provide public complaint services. Table 2 shows the data ownership and usage for the three interactive e-government applications.

Table 2: Number of agencies owning and using e-government applications.

Application name	Number of agencies owning the application	Number of agencies using the application for public complaints
e-LAPOR	1	1
SIPASADA	1	1
Agency Website	25	3

Table 2 shows that 25 of the 30 agencies had public complaints applications. Of the 25 agencies, 1 had an e-LAPOR application and an agency website, 1 had a

SIPASADA and an agency website, and 23 had agency website. However, of the 25 agencies, actually only 4 agencies use these applications to provide public complaints services. The agency used e-LAPOR as a public complaint service did not use their agency website for the same purpose. In contrast, those using SIPASADA for public complaint services also used their agency websites. Furthermore, other 21 agencies provide websites only for dissemination services without a public complaint service function.

The research also found that agencies own and use social media for public complaint services, including Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Table 3 shows the data on ownership and usage of the three social media.

Table 3: Number of agencies owning and using social media accounts.

Social Media	Number of Agencies owning social media	Number of agencies used for public complaints
Facebook	7	2
Instagram	15	7
Youtube	1	1

A total of 18 agencies have social media accounts, where 4 have Facebook and Instagram, 1 Instagram and YouTube, 3 only Facebook, and 10 only Instagram. Table 3 shows that most agencies use Instagram. This social media use as an informal platform using images to explain a process, attracting users (Gruzd et al., 2018). Instagram allows unrequited followers than Facebook, which limits connections (Faber, 2021). Furthermore, 7 agencies use social media for complaints, 2 use Facebook and Instagram, 1 uses Instagram and YouTube, and 4 only use Instagram. The government's response is an essential strategy for using social media to build citizens involvement, facilitating participation, collaboration, and public complaints (Criado & Villodre, 2021).

Tables 2 and 3 show more agencies with interactive e-government applications than social media. This is due to regulations, including Presidential Decree No. 3 of 2003 on agencies' interactive e-government applications, especially government websites. The implementation is among the assessment indicators for online services in e-government development by UN-EDGI (United Nation, 2020). Furthermore, the agency's initiative is social media utilization.

Findings showed higher social media usage as a public complaint service than interactive e-government applications. This shows that the

government prefers social media to e-government applications for public complaints due to several following factors.

First, the service users (citizens) factor. Apparently, interactive service facilities on the website do not affect people's intentions to access e-government websites (Cahyono & Susanto, 2019). People prefer social media platforms to e-government websites (Bonsón et al., 2012) because they are unaware of the these public complaint applications (Dini et al., 2018). Citizens and agency capabilities affect the low adoption of these services, despite being packaged as a social media model (Dini et al., 2018). On the other hand, social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube allow the citizens to interact with the government easier and featured with simpler access mechanisms (Khan et al., 2021). The presence of social media helps reach wider citizens attention (Joshi & Islam, 2018) and increases complaints proposal (Hariguna et al., 2019) due to higher user acceptance of promoted services (Yi et al., 2021). Citizens also have good performance expectancy (PE) of social media as a public complaint service channel (Chao, 2019). This public preference led the government to promote its presence on social media as a social influence (SI), promoting government interest and initiatives (Adrees et al., 2019)(Singh et al., 2020).

Second, there are cheaper and easier service costs using social media (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018; Silva et al., 2019; Spierings & Jacobs, 2019; Vaccari, 2017). Actually, e-government applications are also intended for cost savings because these applications are designed to be able to integrate various services (Evans & Yen, 2006). However, these applications are part of a sustainable system that requires development and maintenance costs (Lederer et al., 1990). While the costs of developing and maintaining systems in social media applications are not the user (including the government) responsibility, but the developer.

Third, there are weak human resources competence for e-government providers (Gao & Lee, 2017), including management and technical (Ariana et al., 2020; Malodia et al., 2021). Competence hinders the implementation of e-government in developing countries (Sabani et al., 2019). The end-users believe that social media competencies are lower than e-government applications, despite similar features (Park & Lee, 2018). The agency employees as middle users have more roles in operating applications than end-users, requiring higher competencies (Papa et al., 2017). This demand requires professional training for employees, including time and money. Developing countries are challenged by the lack of professional training to

improve employee competence in implementing e-government applications (Sabani et al., 2019). This can be solved through easy and relative technology requiring less IT competence (Park & Lee, 2018). For example, social media is an alternative to certain e-government services (Khan et al., 2021).

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

This research showed that the government prefers social media channels to e-Government applications for public complaint services. Social media can solve the applications' limited developments, including a budget, human resources, and citizen access.

This research provides new insights on the government's preferences at the regency level for public complaint services between social media and e-government applications. The channel preferences discussed cover the citizen's perspective, indicating that the adoption of e-government applications through the public complaint services should take into account the citizens' point of view to optimize the use of services and budgets. However, its research limitation includes focusing on government online channels and disregarding traditional ones. The data from the online channel cannot fully describe public complaints in the area. Furthermore, the research object was limited to several media. For instance, the LAPOR application has other channels, such as SMS and websites, besides the e-LAPOR channel.

This research recommends that the government increase the citizens awareness of the public complaint application to optimize its usage. Governments can promote these services through social media and improve the application to be more responsive than social media. The citizens should be involved in the application development to increase their interest and appreciate their feedback. In the selection of social media, the government needs to prioritize social media that supports an interactive two-way communication format, with users not limited to certain circles and commonly used by all age groups.

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