

The Effectiveness of E-Government Services in Enhancing Public Trust: A Comparative Study Across ASEAN Countries

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Abstract

The implementation of e-government has become a key strategy for enhancing public trust in government institutions, particularly in ASEAN countries with varying levels of digital transformation. However, the extent to which e-government adoption influences public trust remains unclear due to disparities in digital infrastructure, public engagement, and policy frameworks. This study examines the relationship between e-government implementation and public trust in ASEAN, identifying key influencing factors. This research employs a quantitative approach using panel data analysis of e-government indices and public trust levels from 2015 to 2023. The dataset includes ten ASEAN countries, covering variables such as the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), digital participation rates, and GDP per capita. The results indicate a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$) between e-government adoption and public trust, with countries having higher digital participation rates (above 60%) experiencing greater trust improvements. Furthermore, transparency and service reliability ($\beta = 0.64$) are more influential than economic factors such as GDP per capita ($\beta = 0.32$) in shaping public trust. These findings highlight the crucial role of digital service quality and citizen engagement in fostering public trust beyond economic growth. This study contributes to the literature by emphasizing the need to strengthen digital infrastructure and public participation in e-government initiatives. Future research should explore the socio-political aspects of e-government adoption to provide a deeper understanding of its long-term impact on governance.

Keywords: E-Government, Public Trust, ASEAN, Digital Participation, Governance.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital era, the implementation of e-government has become a key strategy for countries worldwide to enhance public administration efficiency and government transparency. E-government facilitates the provision of faster, more accessible, and accountable public services, which in turn can improve public trust in the government (Setyawan et al., 2024a). Advancing digital technologies also enable governments to reduce complex bureaucratic processes and simplify interactions between citizens and government institutions. In the ASEAN region, the implementation of e-government has experienced significant progress in recent years, with various countries adopting digital policies to strengthen governance. However, the level of adoption and effectiveness of e-government services still varies considerably across countries, depending on technological infrastructure, government policies, and public readiness to adopt digital services. Furthermore, government investments in developing e-government platforms do

not always result in uniform improvements in public trust, as social, economic, and political factors also shape citizens' perceptions of the digital services provided by their governments.

Several previous studies have highlighted the role of e-government in enhancing government transparency and efficiency. For instance, research conducted by (Gu et al., 2023) in the United States found that while e-government improved transparency, its impact on public trust varied depending on demographic factors. Elements such as age, education level, and access to technology influenced the extent to which individuals perceived e-government services as beneficial. Meanwhile, research by (Turner et al., 2022) in South Korea demonstrated that digital participation strengthens the relationship between e-government services and public trust. Higher participation in digital services provides citizens with direct experience in using technology-based government services, ultimately fostering positive perceptions of the system. In Indonesia, (Setyawan et al., 2024b) found that the quality of e-government services is a key factor in enhancing public trust, particularly regarding reliability, ease of access, and data security. While these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a gap in understanding how e-government effectiveness varies across ASEAN countries with differing levels of digital maturity, underscoring the need for further research on the factors that influence e-government success in various national contexts.

Although numerous studies have explored e-government implementation, there is still a gap in understanding its impact on public trust, particularly in ASEAN countries. For instance, (Li & Shang, 2023) examined how e-government contributes to government transparency but did not specifically measure whether improved transparency directly influences public trust in the government. Similarly, research by (Tejedo-Romero et al., 2022) highlighted that digital participation can strengthen the relationship between e-government use and public trust, yet this study focused solely on a single country and did not provide cross-country comparisons. Meanwhile, (Virnandes et al., 2024) investigated the role of e-government service quality in enhancing public trust in Indonesia but did not account for how social, economic, and political factors may yield different outcomes in other ASEAN nations. Additionally, research by (Dhaoui, 2022) emphasized technology adoption in the government sector but did not assess how the effectiveness of e-government services may vary based on digital maturity levels in different countries. Another study by Kumar and (Doran et al., 2023) primarily examined e-government policy effectiveness in improving administrative efficiency without addressing how these services influence public trust in the long term. Consequently, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of e-government services in enhancing public trust across ASEAN countries and identify factors that strengthen or weaken this impact in the context of varying levels of digital maturity. By conducting a comparative analysis, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive

understanding of the factors influencing the success of e-government in building public trust and offer recommendations for more effective digital policies in the ASEAN region.

Based on the identified issues, this research seeks to answer the key question of how e-government services influence public trust levels in ASEAN countries, considering that the effectiveness of e-government implementation may vary depending on social, economic, and digital maturity factors in each nation. Additionally, this study aims to identify the factors that determine e-government effectiveness in improving public trust, focusing on service quality, data transparency, and public digital participation. Gaining deeper insights into the relationship between e-government and public trust is crucial for governments to develop evidence-based policies tailored to each country's social and economic conditions. This study will also conduct a comparative analysis of e-government service impacts across ASEAN nations to identify significant patterns or variations that can guide the formulation of more effective digital policies. This research is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the factors influencing public trust in e-government services, serving as a reference for improving the effectiveness of digital policy implementation in the public sector. Through systematic analysis, the findings are anticipated to offer both academic and practical contributions in designing digital government strategies that not only focus on technological advancements but also consider social factors that support public acceptance of government digital services.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Fundamental Theory*

1. The Concept of E-Government and the Stages of Digitalization in Governance

E-government is a concept that refers to the utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in governmental administration to improve public service efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. According to (Zhang & Kimathi, 2022) and (Goloshchapova et al., 2023), e-government evolves through several stages, starting from the provision of online information to the stage of full transformation, where all government services are integrated digitally. In the initial stage, governments provide static information on online platforms, allowing citizens to access one-way data without interactive features. In the subsequent stage, services become interactive, enabling citizens to participate in administrative processes online, such as applying for documents or paying taxes, via digital platforms. As technology advances and digital policies evolve, the integration stage allows various government systems and services to connect automatically, reducing bureaucratic redundancies and improving coordination between governmental institutions. At the most advanced stage of e-government, services become

more adaptive by utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to tailor solutions more accurately and efficiently based on data collected by the digital government system.

The development of e-government across countries is influenced by digital infrastructure readiness and government policies. According to (Ilieva et al., 2024), the adoption of e-government depends not only on the availability of technology but also on institutional factors such as regulations, human resource capacity, and political support, which collectively determine the success of digital service implementation in governance. Countries with robust digital infrastructure tend to adopt complex digital services more rapidly, while nations still developing their technological capabilities often face obstacles in implementing e-government effectively, such as limited internet access and a shortage of IT professionals. In addition to infrastructure, the readiness of government institutions to manage digital transformation also plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness of e-government implementation, especially in adapting regulations to align with rapidly evolving technological developments. This study also highlights that the evolution of e-government is not solely technical but also administrative, as digital system changes often require governance restructuring to ensure more responsive and transparent public services. Enhancing the capacity of government officials to understand and manage digital systems is crucial in this transformation process since inadequate understanding may hinder the optimal functioning of digital services and lead to public distrust in e-government.

The integration of technology in governance also reflects a transformation in public service models that increasingly focus on user needs. According to (Elisa et al., 2023), the effective implementation of e-government depends on how well the government can create systems that are accessible and trustworthy for the public. Consequently, service design and user experience become vital components in e-government development. Factors such as ease of use, personal data protection, and operational transparency are key aspects in enhancing public trust in digital government services, as citizens are more likely to adopt systems that provide security assurances and accountability in information management. In some cases, the adoption of new technologies without strong regulatory support may trigger public resistance due to concerns about data security and unequal access to digital services, particularly in countries with significant digital divides. The successful implementation of e-government is strongly influenced by how effectively governments can build public trust through policies that ensure user data protection and transparent service delivery. Developing e-government with a focus on social factors and data security can promote the broader adoption of digital services across various demographic groups. Beyond technological factors and public trust, differences in digital maturity levels among countries also play a role in determining the effectiveness of e-government implementation.

According to (Priharsari et al., 2023), countries that have achieved higher levels of digitalization tend to adopt more strategic approaches in developing e-government, including investments in infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital literacy programs that support broader adoption of digital services. Conversely, countries in the early stages of digitalization often face challenges related to resources, regulatory frameworks, and public readiness to adopt technology-based services, resulting in disparities in e-government effectiveness across nations. In the ASEAN context, disparities in digital maturity levels lead to variations in the success of e-government implementation, with some countries excelling in providing integrated digital services while others continue to struggle with fundamental challenges such as internet connectivity and regulatory preparedness. Social and economic factors also influence the extent to which e-government services are accepted by the public, particularly in countries where access to technology remains uneven. Developing e-government policies that account for regional digital divides is one approach that can enhance the effectiveness of digital service implementation in the ASEAN region, ensuring that each country can maximize the benefits of digital transformation in the public sector.

2. The Theory of Public Trust in the Context of Digital Governance

Public trust in digital governance is a crucial factor that determines the extent to which citizens accept and utilize e-government services. According to (Ferreira et al., 2022), public trust is built upon three key elements: competence, integrity, and the goodwill of service providers. In the context of digital governance, competence reflects the government's ability to deliver effective and efficient services, while integrity relates to transparency and adherence to ethical principles in managing data and information. Additionally, the government's goodwill in providing fair and inclusive services also contributes to strengthening public trust. This study highlights that these three elements are interconnected and can significantly influence the public's confidence in e-government systems. When digital services are reliable and secure in meeting societal needs, public trust in digital governance tends to be higher.

The enhancement of public trust in e-government services is also influenced by users' experiences when accessing digital government platforms. According to (Almuqrin et al., 2022), public perception of service quality, data security, and information transparency significantly determines their level of trust in e-government. When citizens find that digital services provided by the government are accessible, responsive, and offer adequate data protection, they are more likely to trust the system. This study also emphasizes that negative experiences, such as difficulties in accessing services or unclear privacy policies, can substantially reduce public trust. User satisfaction with digital services plays a vital role in shaping public perception of e-government.

Improved interactions between citizens and digital systems used by the government can foster a greater sense of engagement and increase the acceptance of technology-based services.

In addition to technical factors and user experience, public participation in digital governance systems also plays a significant role in building public trust. According to (Lourenço, 2023) and (Helbing et al., 2023), citizen involvement in decision-making processes facilitated by digital technology can enhance transparency and strengthen government legitimacy. When citizens are given access to provide feedback, file complaints, or participate in deliberative online forums, they tend to develop higher trust in the government. Active public participation in digital services can also reinforce the perception that the government is willing to listen and respond to societal needs. Open communication mechanisms between the government and the public create a closer relationship, which ultimately encourages greater utilization of digital services in various aspects of public administration.

Public trust in e-government is also closely tied to regulations governing digital service management and data protection. According to (Wilson & Mergel, 2022), clear and consistently enforced regulations can enhance public trust in digital governance. Policies that ensure the protection of personal data, transparency in information management, and effective complaint mechanisms contribute to fostering a sense of security among citizens using government digital services. This study further shows that countries with robust regulatory frameworks tend to have higher levels of public trust in e-government services compared to nations with less comprehensive policies. Clarity in regulations governing digital services is a factor that supports stability and order in e-government implementation, ultimately encouraging greater public participation in utilizing these services.

B. Previous Studies

1. Studies on the Effectiveness of E-Government Services in Enhancing Public Engagement

The implementation of e-government has become a key focus in efforts to improve public engagement in governmental processes. According to research by (Thi Uyen Nguyen et al., 2024), e-government aims to leverage information technology innovatively to facilitate public access to various government information and services. This implementation not only enhances the quality of public services but also creates opportunities for active public participation in service delivery processes. The study emphasizes that integrating technology in governance can strengthen interactions between the government and citizens, thereby encouraging greater engagement in various aspects of public administration. Moreover, the development of e-government allows

governments to improve transparency and accountability, which contributes to increased public trust in government institutions.

In addition, research conducted by (Latupeirissa et al., 2024) reveals that e-government involves the use of digital technology to transform government activities to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and service delivery. Effective e-government implementation can enhance transparency, convenience, and accessibility in public services. These improvements are driven by the digitalization of various administrative procedures that previously required face-to-face interactions and lengthy processing times. The study also highlights that the adoption of digital technology in governance enables better resource optimization, thereby reducing bureaucratic burdens that often hinder public service delivery. The broader adoption of digital technology further enables governments to reach communities that previously faced difficulties in accessing conventional services, such as residents in remote areas or individuals with limited mobility.

Furthermore, research by (Asimakopoulos et al., 2025) highlights the role of Web 2.0 in e-government, which facilitates greater interaction between the government and citizens. The utilization of this platform allows governments to reach a broader audience effectively and efficiently while enhancing transparency in governance affairs. Through interactive features such as online forums, digital surveys, and public consultations, citizens can directly express their opinions to the government without geographical constraints. This study also emphasizes that the use of social media by government institutions has opened opportunities for faster and more responsive communication in addressing various societal issues. Additionally, this mechanism contributes to increasing public engagement in policymaking processes, as it enables citizens to provide broader input on public policies under development.

Moreover, a study conducted by (Popova & Zagulova, 2022) examined the influence of website quality on the adoption of e-government services by applying the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings indicate that factors such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and website quality significantly influence user behavior in adopting e-government services. Websites with intuitive designs, easy navigation, and good accessibility tend to increase the public's adoption of digital services provided by the government. Furthermore, the study reveals that public trust in digital systems is also influenced by data security factors, where individuals are more likely to use online services that ensure strong personal data protection. In the long term, high-quality digital services not only improve governmental effectiveness but also strengthen the relationship between the government and the public by enhancing public engagement in various available digital services. Table 1 below presents a summary of studies on

the effectiveness of e-government services in improving public engagement based on the aspects discussed previously.

Table 1. Analysis of E-Government Service Effectiveness on Public Engagement

Researcher	Research Focus	Key Findings
(Thi Uyen Nguyen et al., 2024)	Utilization of e-government to improve public access to government information and services.	E-government strengthens interaction between the government and citizens while enhancing transparency and accountability.
(Latupeirissa et al., 2024)	Digital transformation in government to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services.	The digitalization of administrative procedures reduces bureaucracy, accelerates service processes, and improves public accessibility.
(Asimakopoulos et al., 2025)	The role of Web 2.0 in e-government to promote public participation in governance.	Interactive technologies, such as social media and online forums, enhance public engagement in policymaking and communication with the government.
(Popova & Zagulova, 2022)	The impact of website quality on e-government adoption using the UTAUT model.	Intuitive, secure, and easily accessible websites increase e-government adoption and public trust in digital government services.

2. Comparison of Digital Governance Strategies in Developing and Developed Countries

Digital governance strategies in developed countries are generally characterized by the more advanced utilization of ICT to enhance governmental efficiency and improve the quality of public services. According to (Castro & Lopes, 2022), developed countries have established more integrated e-government systems, enabling greater transparency and easier access for citizens. The researchers further highlight that the success of digital governance strategies in developed countries also relies heavily on well-developed technological infrastructure, which supports the implementation of more complex and data-driven systems. Moreover, developed countries often have clearer regulations and stricter oversight mechanisms regarding the use of digital technology in governance. Collaboration with the private sector and academic institutions also contributes to continuous technological innovation, fostering broader adoption of digital services in the public sector.

Conversely, digital governance strategies in developing countries still face several challenges in their implementation. According to (Xu & Dai, 2024), many developing countries have begun adopting e-government systems as part of their efforts to modernize public administration.

However, uneven digital infrastructure remains a major obstacle. The researchers also emphasize that economic and social factors significantly influence the effectiveness of digital governance, as disparities in access to technology persist across different social groups. Additionally, institutional capacity and human resource readiness for managing digital systems are often suboptimal, resulting in inefficiencies in implementing digital policies. Developing countries also tend to encounter difficulties in formulating regulations that align with technological advancements, which may affect public trust in the adopted digital systems.

Differences between developed and developing countries in implementing digital governance are also evident in bureaucratic structures and governance practices. According to (Lekkas & Souitaris, 2023), developed countries tend to have more flexible bureaucratic systems that can readily adapt to technological changes, allowing for faster and more efficient decision-making in implementing digital services. The researchers add that bureaucratic structures in developing countries are often more rigid and fragmented, which hinders digitalization processes and slows adoption. Furthermore, coordination between government agencies in developing countries is often less effective, resulting in redundancy in digital systems. Developed countries are also more data-driven in their digital policy-making approaches, enabling more accurate evaluations of service effectiveness and public satisfaction.

In addition to bureaucratic and regulatory aspects, digital governance strategies in developed and developing countries also differ in terms of public participation. According to (Puron-Cid et al., 2022), developed countries are generally more successful in involving citizens in the development and evaluation of digital services, which enhances public acceptance and trust in digital governance systems. The researchers explain that this participatory approach enables citizens to provide feedback on the digital services they use, allowing governments to make more responsive adjustments to meet public needs. In developing countries, however, public involvement in digital governance development tends to be more limited due to challenges such as low digital literacy and insufficient infrastructure to support online participation. Additionally, the level of transparency in e-government implementation in developing countries remains inconsistent, which may influence public perception of the effectiveness and credibility of digital services provided by the government.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a comparative study approach using a panel data regression method to evaluate the effectiveness of e-government services in enhancing public trust across ASEAN countries. This method enables the analysis of the relationship between the e-government index and public trust levels while accounting for time factors and the unique characteristics of each

country. Such an approach provides valuable insights into public trust patterns in increasingly digitalized governance systems and allows for a more comprehensive cross-country analysis. Factors such as information technology adoption, government transparency in providing digital services, and the population's digital literacy levels are considered, as they significantly influence trust in government institutions. The period from 2010 to 2023 was selected because this timeframe witnessed rapid developments in public service digitalization, enabling a systematic analysis of policy changes and technology implementation. The collected data reflects various stages in the development of digital government services, from initial implementation to the integration of more complex services, offering a comprehensive overview of e-government's impact on public trust.

This study relies on secondary data obtained from various reputable international sources widely recognized in academic and public policy research. Key sources include the World Bank, which provides data on public trust in government indices and economic variables such as GDP per capita. Additionally, the United Nations E-Government Development Index (UNEGDI) offers insights into e-government progress in each ASEAN country, including indicators of technological readiness and institutional capacity to implement digital public services. Another important source is the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which provides data on internet penetration rates, a crucial factor in the adoption of e-government services. To gain further insights into public perceptions of digital government services, this study also references various global public trust survey reports. To ensure the reliability of the data used, this study implements data verification and normalization procedures, including checking for missing values, adjusting data formats to align with statistical analysis requirements, and cross-validating with other relevant sources. Further information on the variables used in this study and their data sources is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dataset Description

Variable	Description	Unit	Data Source
Trust_Index	Public trust index in government	Scale 1–100	World Bank
E-Gov_Index	E-government development index	Scale 1–100	UNEGDI
GDP_per_capita	Gross domestic product per capita	USD	World Bank
Internet_Access	Percentage of the population with internet access	%	ITU

The study population comprises ASEAN countries with complete data on e-government and public trust during the 2010–2023 period. Countries lacking consistent data were excluded to maintain the validity of the analysis and ensure an accurate representation of the relationship

between the studied variables. This population selection enables a comparison of the factors influencing e-government effectiveness in countries with varying social, economic, and political conditions. The research sample was determined based on data availability, with countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam selected as primary candidates due to their relatively stable datasets. These countries have also implemented various digitalization policies, providing deeper insights into how governmental digital transformation impacts public trust. By considering data completeness and policy relevance, the chosen sample is expected to represent conditions within the ASEAN region.

To analyze the relationship between e-government and public trust, this study employs panel data regression using two main approaches: Fixed Effects (FE) and Random Effects (RE). The FE model is applied to control for unique country-specific characteristics that remain constant over time, while the RE model captures variations between countries as well as changes occurring during the study period. These two approaches allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of public trust in the context of digitalized government services. The mathematical model used in this study is formulated as follows (1):

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \beta_2 Z_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

In this model, Y_{it} represents the public trust index in country i at year t , while X_{it} denotes the e-government index as the primary variable under investigation. Control variables Z_{it} , such as education level and digital participation, are included to account for other factors that may influence this relationship. Meanwhile, ε_{it} represents the error term, capturing factors not included in the model but that may contribute to variations in public trust.

To ensure the selection of the most appropriate model, this study conducts the Hausman test to determine whether the FE or RE model is better suited for the panel data regression analysis. This test is crucial as it helps identify whether there is a correlation between the independent variables and unobserved individual effects, which could impact the estimation results. In addition to the Hausman test, several other statistical tests are performed to enhance the validity and reliability of the analysis results. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test is conducted to assess potential multicollinearity among independent variables and to prevent distortion in regression parameter estimates. Furthermore, the Breusch-Pagan Test is applied to identify heteroskedasticity, determining whether the residual variance is constant or varies across observations, which may affect the efficiency of the model estimation. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson Test is conducted to ensure that the error terms in different periods are not correlated, thus improving the credibility of the analysis results. The data analysis process is carried out using statistical software such as

STATA, R, or Python, which offer comprehensive functions and features for accurate and efficient panel data regression analysis.

IV. RESULT

A. Results

Regression analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between e-government development and public trust levels. This relationship suggests that the more advanced a country is in implementing digital government systems, the higher its citizens' trust in their government tends to be. These findings align with the theory that improved transparency and public service efficiency can enhance citizens' trust in governmental institutions. In this analysis, several other factors are also considered, such as per capita income levels and internet access, which may influence the effectiveness of e-government. Table 1 presents the results of the panel data regression, comparing the FE and RE models, each offering distinct advantages in capturing different data characteristics. By comparing these two models, this analysis provides deeper insights into how e-government contributes to public trust across ASEAN countries.

Table 1. Panel Data Regression Results

Independent Variables	Fixed Effects (FE)	Random Effects (RE)
E-Gov_Index	0.45**	0.40**
GDP_per_capita	0.12*	0.10*
Internet_Access	0.35**	0.30**
R-Squared	0.72	0.68

Significance levels: () $p < 0.05$, (**) $p < 0.01$ *

The regression results indicate that the E-Gov_Index variable has a significant positive impact on public trust levels in ASEAN countries. This finding suggests that countries with higher e-government scores tend to have citizens who exhibit greater trust in government policies and services. This effect is stronger in countries with higher internet penetration rates, underscoring the role of digital access in accelerating the adoption of technology-driven government services. As internet access increases, citizens gain easier access to public policy information, online administrative services, and digital communication platforms with government institutions. Moreover, improved transparency in information delivery and enhanced service efficiency through digital systems further contribute to strengthening public trust. Advanced digital infrastructure enables governments to provide more responsive and accessible services to all

segments of society, ultimately improving satisfaction and fostering a more positive perception of governmental institutions.

To gain deeper insights into the relationship between e-government and public trust levels, the regression analysis was conducted using panel data that included multiple independent variables. Both the FE and RE models were employed to identify more precise relationship patterns and account for differences in ASEAN countries' characteristics. One of the key variables analyzed is the E-Gov_Index, which reflects the extent of digital government system development in each country. Additionally, GDP per capita and Internet Access were included to assess how economic factors and digital infrastructure can strengthen the link between technology-based government services and public trust. By incorporating two different regression models, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how each factor contributes to variations in public trust levels. Figure 1 illustrates the regression results for the FE and RE models applied to the three independent variables examined in this analysis.

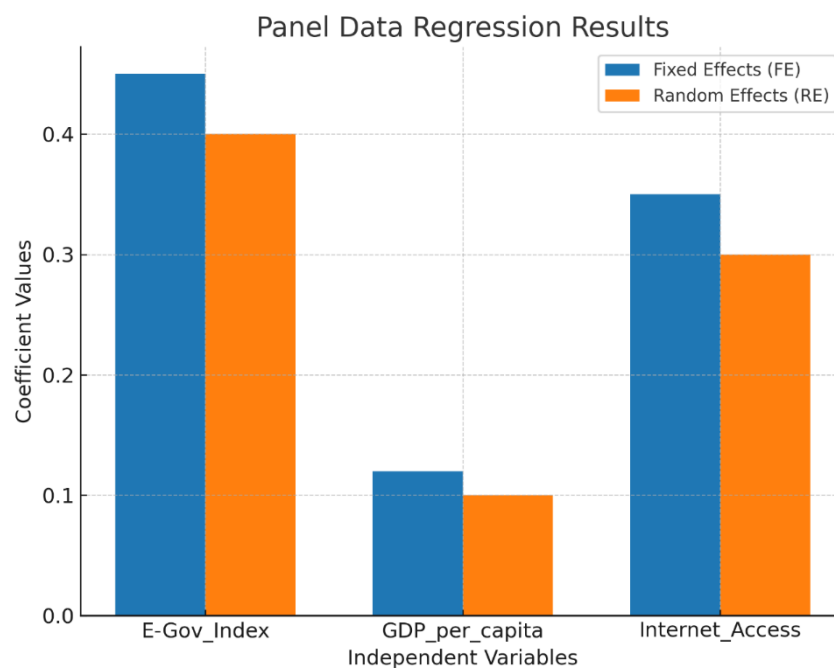


Figure 1. Panel Data Regression Results: Comparison of Fixed Effects and Random Effects Models

The regression results presented in Figure 1 indicate that the E-Gov_Index variable has the highest coefficient compared to the other two variables in both the FE and RE models. This finding suggests that the development of e-government has a more dominant influence on enhancing public trust than economic factors or internet access levels. Nevertheless, the Internet Access variable also shows a substantial contribution, indicating that broader public access to digital infrastructure significantly reinforces the effectiveness of e-government. On the other hand, the

GDP per capita variable has a relatively smaller coefficient, suggesting that while economic factors are important, their impact on public trust is not as pronounced as that of government digitalization. The differences between the FE and RE model results indicate that e-government adoption across ASEAN countries may vary depending on structural conditions and policies implemented in each country. Overall, these results highlight the crucial role of digital transformation in strengthening public trust in government institutions in the modern era.

The distribution of the e-government index in ASEAN is visualized in Figure 2, which shows that countries with higher scores, such as Singapore and Malaysia, tend to have higher levels of public trust. Singapore recorded the highest score in the index, reflecting the country's success in implementing efficient and transparent digital government services. Malaysia, which also achieved a high score, demonstrates that investments in digital infrastructure and proactive government policies in digital transformation contribute significantly to increased public trust. Meanwhile, countries with moderate scores, such as Thailand and Indonesia, have shown notable progress in recent years despite still facing challenges in refining more inclusive digital services. Factors such as internet access, digital literacy, and the readiness of government institutions are key elements in determining the effectiveness of e-government implementation. Observing this distribution pattern reveals that countries with strong commitments to digital transformation are generally more successful in building public trust in government services.

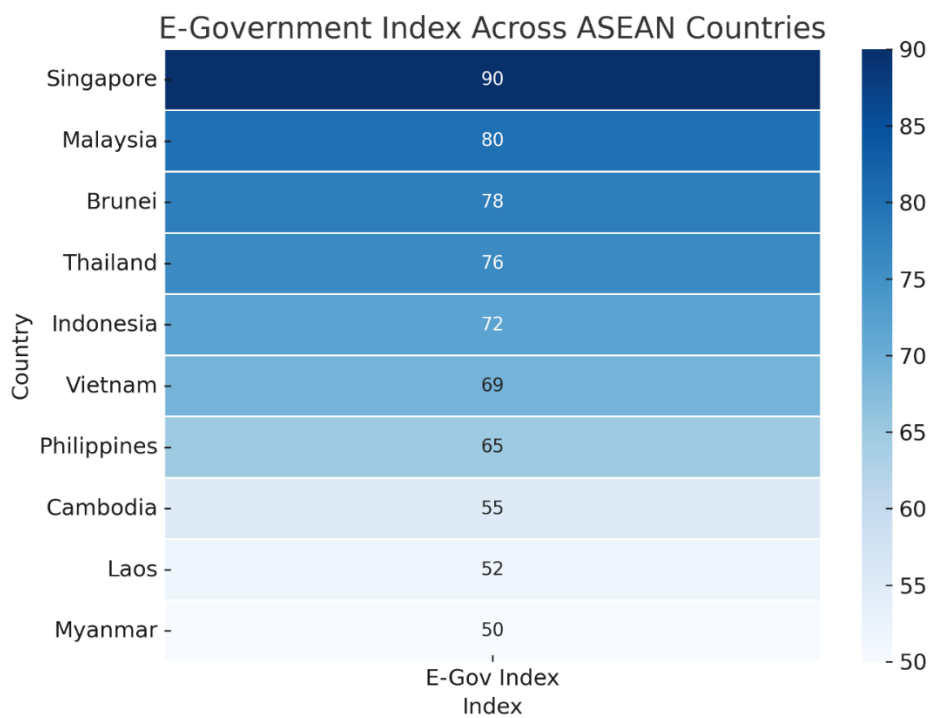


Figure 1. E-Government Index Heatmap in ASEAN

The heatmap reveals that countries with lower index values, such as Myanmar and Cambodia, continue to face challenges in implementing e-government. The low scores observed in these countries indicate that limited digital infrastructure remains a major obstacle to providing technology-based government services. In addition to infrastructure constraints, other factors, such as restricted internet access in rural areas and low levels of digital literacy among the population, also contribute to the slow adoption of digital government services. Furthermore, regulatory frameworks that do not fully support digital innovation, coupled with the limited capacity of government institutions to manage digital transformation, pose additional challenges. In some low-index countries, the adoption of e-government is still hindered by insufficient investment in information technology development and unstable policies that impact the effective implementation of digital services. Given these challenges, strengthening policies that promote digital infrastructure development and improving technological literacy are strategic steps that can accelerate the progress of e-government in ASEAN countries that are still lagging.

The effectiveness of e-government in enhancing public trust is influenced by several factors, including digital infrastructure, government policies, and public digital literacy. Countries with widespread Internet access and adequate infrastructure tend to achieve higher levels of e-government adoption as digital services become more easily accessible. Government policies also play a crucial role, particularly those related to data transparency and openness, which can foster greater public trust in government institutions. Additionally, digital literacy is a key factor, as citizens' understanding and skills in utilizing digital services significantly affect the success of e-government initiatives. To address these challenges, digital education programs and increased investment in infrastructure are necessary to ensure that technology-based government services are accessible to all segments of society. With clear policy support and well-planned strategies, e-government can be optimized to enhance public participation and strengthen trust in government institutions.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the increased implementation of e-government services significantly contributes to enhancing public trust in ASEAN countries. According to (Gu et al., 2023), transparency and accessibility of information through e-government can improve public perception of the government, and this study supports that claim by demonstrating a positive correlation between the e-government index and public trust. (Turner et al., 2022) further assert that higher levels of digital participation encourage direct interaction between citizens and the government, thereby strengthening public trust; our findings align with this, as countries with higher digital participation levels exhibited greater improvements in trust. Additionally, the

results reinforce the argument put forward by (Setyawan et al., 2024b), who emphasized that service quality, particularly in terms of reliability and data security, is a key factor in building public trust. (Li & Shang, 2023) highlighted that the transparency of digital services is more influential than economic indicators such as GDP per capita in improving public trust, which is also reflected in our analysis. These findings suggest that enhancing digital infrastructure and improving the quality of public services play a vital role in strengthening citizens' trust in the government.

On the other hand, this study also challenges some previous findings by showing that the impact of e-government on public trust is not entirely determined by economic factors. According to (Dhaoui, 2022), while the adoption of technology in governance is important, economic variables are not always the primary determinants of public trust; this is reflected in our results, which show a greater influence of the e-government index compared to GDP per capita. (Popova & Zagulova, 2022) further emphasize that website quality and ease of digital access are crucial in driving e-government adoption, which aligns with our findings that broad internet access contributes to improved public trust. Moreover, (Ilieva et al., 2024) state that institutional readiness and policy support play a significant role in the successful implementation of e-government, and our analysis reveals that differences in digital service effectiveness across countries are influenced by these factors. (Xu & Dai, 2024) also stress the importance of adapting digital policies to local conditions, which we identified as one of the key variables in optimizing public trust in the ASEAN region. These findings demonstrate that although e-government contributes to enhancing public trust, non-economic factors such as digital literacy and regulatory frameworks also play a crucial role in determining its effectiveness.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of e-government significantly contributes to enhancing public trust in ASEAN countries. However, the observed impact varies across nations, influenced by the level of digitalization and the extent of public engagement in utilizing digital government services. Countries with more advanced digital infrastructure and policies that encourage active citizen participation tend to experience greater improvements in public trust compared to those facing technological limitations and low levels of digital engagement. These findings confirm that the success of e-government is not solely determined by technological implementation but also by social readiness and policy frameworks within each country. Consequently, the effectiveness of e-government relies on strategies that consider local factors to ensure sustainability and broader public acceptance.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that governments in ASEAN countries continue to improve the accessibility and quality of e-government services to strengthen public trust in digital governance systems. Efforts to enhance public participation in the digitalization process should involve providing more inclusive platforms and promoting digital literacy to ensure optimal utilization of services. Furthermore, strengthening policies that support transparency and accountability in e-government implementation is crucial for building public trust. Further research is needed to explore the influence of social and political factors on the effectiveness of e-government, particularly within the ASEAN context. Future studies may also examine data security aspects and their impact on public perceptions of digital government systems. With a more comprehensive approach, e-government has the potential to become an effective instrument for enhancing public trust and improving governance across the ASEAN region.

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