

The Effectiveness of the E-Sambat Application in Improving the Quality of Service and Community Complaints (Study at the Pasuruan City Communication, Informatics and Statistics Office)

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61796/icoss.v2i2.362>



Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: April 15, 2025

Final Revised: May 01, 2025

Accepted: May 11, 2025

Published: May 24, 2025

Keywords:

e-Sambat

Public Complaint Services

Service Quality

Effectiveness

Innovation

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the e-Sambat application in enhancing the quality of public complaint services in Pasuruan City and to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. **Method:** A descriptive qualitative method with an inductive approach was employed, using Gibson's (2011) effectiveness framework and Zeithaml et al.'s service quality dimensions (in Hiplunudin, 2017). Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation to capture both process and outcome dimensions. **Results:** The findings indicate that the e-Sambat application plays a significant role in streamlining the public complaint process and has contributed positively to service quality, particularly in terms of responsiveness and reliability. Nevertheless, the limited number of users remains a major obstacle, largely due to insufficient socialization and system optimization. Despite these challenges, the services provided through e-Sambat are perceived as satisfactory and capable of addressing various community complaints effectively. **Novelty:** This research provides new insights into the role of digital complaint systems at the municipal level, highlighting e-Sambat not only as an administrative innovation but also as a strategic instrument for improving citizen engagement and fostering sustainable public service transformation.

INTRODUCTION

Providing quality public services is the main responsibility in government management. Anwar (2000) mentioned that public services play a role as a bridge between the government and citizens in carrying out their duties and functions [1]. Indonesia is now entering a rapidly growing digital stage. To overcome this challenge, the government encourages various innovations based on digital technology to improve service quality [2]. People also increasingly want fast, efficient, and effective administrative services. Thus, public service providers are required to be able to provide responsive services and adapt to technological advances [3].

Government Regulation No. 38 Year 2017 explains that innovation is all kinds of changes made by provincial governments to improve their performance [4]. So that the regions can create and develop innovation, the government has given a number of rules to the local government as a guide in implementing innovation. This is intended to help regional managers improve the welfare of the community by presenting various innovations [5].

Indonesia is currently in a digital phase that is experiencing very rapid progress. To face this challenge, the government is the one who encourages various innovations based on digital technology to improve the quality of service. The public is also

increasingly urgent to get fast, efficient, and effective administrative services. Thus, public service providers are expected to be able to provide responsive services and be able to adapt to technological advances [6]. This is very crucial because digital services are something that is familiar to the community. The purpose of digitalization is not just to offer standard services online or develop applications. Digital transformation includes more than just transferring services to online platforms, but also how every aspect of services can be integrated so that changes in the service process can be implemented and enable the realization of "values" of satisfaction for their users [7].

Pasuruan City Government is considered as one of the areas that lacks innovation according to the assessment of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The evaluation is stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 002. 65848 Year 2021 regarding the Regional Innovation Index for Provinces, Districts, and Cities. In these measurements, each region is divided into three categories of innovation, namely very innovative, innovative, and less innovative. Pasuruan City is ranked 83rd out of 93 cities in Indonesia, with a score of 13.60 and is included in the less innovative category.

As an answer to the evaluation, the Pasuruan City Government began to introduce various innovations in digital services. One of the innovations created is the e-Sambat application, which aims to improve the quality of public services. This step is in line with Pasuruan Mayor Regulation Number 70 of 2022 regarding the Management of Online Community Complaints in the Pasuruan City Government Environment. Through this application, the public can submit reports, complaints, or input regarding public services. The official e-Sambat application was introduced in early January 2022 and is expected to be a participation tool in efforts to improve local government services [8].



Figure 1. Front Page of the Pasuruan City E-Sambat System

Source : <https://esambat.pasuruankota.go.id/>

Based on the issues that have been explained before, the purpose of this research is to analyze how effective the e-Sambat application is in improving the quality of public complaint services. In addition, this research also seeks to identify factors that can support or hinder the use of these applications in a digital public service environment. Thus, this study assesses the implementation of e-Sambat as a digital innovation by the Pasuruan City Government and emphasizes various challenges and opportunities that affect the optimization of community complaint services.

The results of the initial interview with the Pasuruan City Communication, Informatics, and Statistics Office, which was revealed by Mr. Danang as an employee, showed that there are still many public complaints that have not been addressed. The low response to complaints and the lack of socialization regarding the application to residents shows that the e-Sambat application has not been functioning optimally. This situation shows the need for a thorough assessment of the existing complaint management system so that the application can truly be a participatory tool in improving the quality of public services. Therefore, this research is important to evaluate the effectiveness of e-Sambat in public services in Pasuruan City.

The public service theory states that the main role of the government is as a servant for the community by providing services that are able to meet the needs and rights of citizens efficiently, effectively, and with quality [9]. Public services include a series of activities in the provision of goods, services, and administrative services by the government as a form of responsibility to improve the welfare of the community [10]. Along with the advancement of digital technology, public services have undergone changes that not only include the provision of online services, but also integrate various aspects of services to accelerate and increase user satisfaction [11].

As a step to improve the performance and quality of public services, the government accelerates the creation of regional innovation with policies contained in Government Regulation Number 38 of 2017 regarding Regional Innovation. This policy has a goal to accelerate the achievement of public welfare through improving the quality of public services, strengthening the community, and increasing regional competitiveness [12]. One of the concrete examples of digital innovation at the regional level is the e-Sambat application in Pasuruan City, which is intended to facilitate online public complaints. It is hoped that this application can increase the effectiveness in handling complaints and provide faster and more accurate answers to the community.

The effectiveness of digital-based public services such as e-Sambat can be measured through several parameters, including: (1) speed in handling and resolving public complaints, (2) the level of application use by residents, (3) public satisfaction with the services provided, (4) ease of access and use of applications, and (5) community participation in providing complaints or input. These parameters show the extent to which digital innovation is able to improve the quality of public services and encourage the active involvement of the community in the management of information technology-based government.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative method with descriptive characteristics, which aims to assess how effective the e-Sambat application is in improving the quality of service and handling public complaints at the Communication, Informatics, and Statistics Office in Pasuruan City. The scope of this research is limited as explained by Moleong (2017), so that researchers only collect relevant data and in accordance with the research

objectives [13]. The data used consists of primary data obtained through in- depth interviews with government employess and the community using the application, and secondary data derived from official documents, reports, and related regulations. Data collection is done through observation, interview, and documentation, as revealed by Sugiyono (2015), which states that data collection is the most crucial step in a study [14]. The determination of the informant is done by the snowball sampling method, which is the selection of the informant gradually based on the recommendations of the informant who has existed before and is considered to have mastered the problem well. Data analysis techniques follow the interactive model put forward by Miles and Huberman (1992), which consists of four steps, namely: (1) data collection, which is the process of obtaining data from the field through observation, interview, and documentation; (2) data reduction, which is the process of sorting, summarizing, and focusing data that is relevant to the purpose of the research; (3) data presentation, which is compiling data in the form of a narrative, citation, or matrix, so that it is easier to draw conclusions; and (4) drawing conclusions and verification, which is the stage where the researcher collects findings from the data that has been analyzed and re-examine to ensure the validity of the research results [15].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Effectiveness of Using the E-Sambat Application

The effectiveness of using the E-Sambat application in improving the quality of community complaint services in Pasuruan City can be analyzed through five indicators as formulated by Gibson, namely productivity, efficiency, satisfaction, adaptation, and development. These five indicators describe the overall dimension of the effectiveness of a digital public service system. Each indicator has a strategic meaning that reflects the extent to which the application is able to play a role as a link between the community and the government in terms of conveying aspirations [16].

1. Productivity

The first indicator is productivity, which has a meaning as a measure of how much output is produced by the public service system in order to fulfill its goals. In the context of the E-Sambat application, productivity can be interpreted as the number of reports or community complaints that have been successfully received and processed by the Pasuruan City Communication and Information Service within a certain period of time. The results of the interview with the complaint management staff at the Communication and Information Service stated that the number of reports that entered the application in the last three months (April-June 2025) was quite stable, an average of 30 reports per month. However, not all reports are followed up quickly, due to limited resources and piling up work queues. The following is a recapitulation data of the number of incoming reports and follow-up reports for three months:

Table 1. Recapitulation of the Number of Reports and Follow-ups on the e-Sambat Application (April-June 2025)

Month	Reports Received	Reports Followed Up	Reports Unresolved
April 2025	28	21	7
May 2025	30	20	10
June 2025	32	26	6

Source: Researcher (2025)

This data shows that although productivity is quite high in terms of the number of successfully followed up reports, there are still some unfinished reports, indicating that the performance is not fully optimal. According to Gibson's theory (2011), productivity is not only seen from the quantity of output, but also from the quality of completion and conformity with organizational goals. So in this context, the E-Sambat application shows good productivity in terms of quantity, but still needs improvement in terms of handling quality.

2. Efficiency

The second indicator is efficiency, which means the extent to which the use of resources such as time, energy, and technology can produce maximum output. Efficiency in digital complaint services can be seen from the response speed and report handling workflow. The results of the interview with the technical official stated that the response to the report was highly dependent on the time of the complaint. If the report comes in during working hours, the response tends to be faster. But if you enter outside of working hours, the response can be delayed until the next day. Here is the response time data from several sample user reports:

Table 2. Response Time to Community Complaints through the e-Sambat Application (July 2025)

Complaint Date	Entry Time	Response Time	Response Duration
10 July 2025	09.00 WIB	09.45 WIB	45 minutes
11 July 2025	14.30 WIB	08.00 WIB (tomorrow)	17 hours 30 minutes
12 July 2025	11: 15 WIB	16.30 WIB	5 hours 15 minutes

Source: Researcher (2025)

Based on the table, quick response occurs when the report comes in in the morning, while the delay occurs in the afternoon or evening report. This shows that the efficiency of the system still depends on manual working time, not yet fully automated. If linked to Herbert Simon's theory, efficiency demands efficient procedures and minimal bureaucratic obstacles. In this case, the E-Sambat system still requires the simplification of the report distribution flow as well as the strengthening of working time management so that the service is more responsive and efficient all the time.

3. Satisfaction

The third indicator is public satisfaction, which is the extent to which people feel satisfied with the services provided. Public satisfaction greatly determines the sustainability of using the application because the public's perception of service quality will affect their participation. Based on interviews with two application users, there is a positive view of the ease of access to the application, but there are also complaints about the lack of further notifications after the report is sent. Some users are doubtful whether their reports are really handled because there are no clear status updates. Here is the data of the satisfaction survey conducted on 25 users:

Table 3. Results of the User Satisfaction Survey on the e-Sambat Application

Service Satisfaction Aspects	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Less Satisfied
Response Speed	18%	60%	22%
Problem Solving	20%	56%	24%
Ethics & Officer Communication	16%	66%	22%

Source: Researcher (2025)

The data shows that the majority of users feel quite satisfied, but some are still not satisfied, especially regarding the clarity of the follow-up. If associated with the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al., then the responsiveness and assurance dimensions still need to be improved. In digital services, quality is not only measured by the speed of response, but also the clarity of service results and empathetic communication. Therefore, this aspect of satisfaction shows the importance of transparency and feedback to the community.

4. Adaptation

The fourth indicator is adaptation, which means the system's ability to adapt to community needs and technological advances. In the context of digitizing public services, adaptation includes ease of application access, flexibility of use in various devices, and community readiness to use technology-based services. Based on the interview with the application technical officer, it is known that E-Sambat is compatible with various devices, both Android, iOS, and desktop. However, some people still have difficulty accessing the features in the application, especially for the elderly. Here are the results of the application technical test based on five aspects of accessibility:

Table 4.

E-Sambat Application Test Aspects	Test Result (Scale 5)
Access Speed	4/5
Ease of Menu Navigation	3/5
Problem When Login	1 case found
Usage Guide Available	Yes

The table shows that the application is quite good from the system side, but there are still obstacles from the user side. Contingency theory states that the success of a system depends heavily on the compatibility between organizational structure, technology, and user conditions. So it can be concluded that the system's adaptability has been partially fulfilled, but still requires a social approach in the form of digital education to encourage overall community adaptation.

5. Development

The last indicator is development, which refers to the extent to which applications or public service systems are able to experience continuous updates and improvements [17]. In the context of E-Sambat, application development can be measured through the frequency of system updates, feature additions, and community involvement in providing improvement suggestions. An interview with the executive staff stated that since its launch, the E-Sambat application has undergone two major updates, namely in 2023 and 2025. However, there are still few suggestions from the community. The following is the data of community participation in application development in June 2025:

Table 5. Community Participation in the Development of the e-Sambat Application (June 2025)

Types of Community Input	Number of Reports
Complaint Report	28
Suggestions & Feedback	3
Anonymous Report	9

Source: Researcher (2025)

Based on the data, the number of incoming reports is quite large, but suggestions or input are very minimal. This shows that communication between the government and the community has not been actively two-way. Based on the theory of organizational learning from Argyris and Schön, good development must be reflective, namely improving procedures based on input from users. The new E-Sambat system is in the single-loop learning stage, which is fixing technical errors without changing the service paradigm. To increase long-term effectiveness, community feedback-based development steps are needed so that the application becomes more responsive and relevant.

Discussion

If juxtaposed with management and public service theories, the effectiveness of the E-Sambat application is at an intermediate level: successfully opening digital access to complaint services, but still facing challenges in the field of system efficiency, user adaptation, and participatory development.

Indicator	Practical Assessment	Theory Support
Productivity	Quite Tall	Gulick Gibson
Efficiency	Fluctuating	Simon
Satisfaction	Medium (60% satisfied)	SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al.)
Adaptation	Adaptive system, the user has not yet	Contingency Theory, Sociotechnology
Development	Low participation	Argyris & Schön (Organizational Learning)

The results of the study indicate that the use of e-Sambat is considered quite effective in improving the quality of community complaint services in Pasuruan City. The effectiveness is analyzed based on the theory of organizational effectiveness put forward by Gibson (2011:32), which includes five main indicators, namely: (1) Productivity, which is seen from the capacity of the e-Sambat application in receiving and distributing community reports in a structured and quality manner; (2) Efficiency, which is seen from the speed of the agency in responding and resolving complaints on time; (3) Satisfaction, which is seen from the appreciation and positive response of the community to the complaint services provided; (4) Adaptation, where the community can adapt and utilize the application well; and (5) Development, which shows the need for further development by the agency so that the application remains relevant and sustainable in the future. This finding reinforces the conclusion that e-Sambat is one of the innovations in digital services that are effective to meet the public's demands for public complaint services.

Factors that support the success of the implementation of this application include the availability of free Wi-Fi facilities in every RW in Pasuruan City, which facilitates public access to the application, as well as the existence of human resources that are in accordance with the technical needs of application management. However, there are several inhibiting factors, such as the existence of dual positions and employee mutations that affect the continuity of application management, low digital literacy in some communities (inability to use technology), lack of socialization from the government, and limited service time that is only available on working days and hours. Therefore, although the e-Sambat application has shown effectiveness, continuous improvement and strengthening still need to be done so that the achievement of improving the quality of public services in Pasuruan City can be optimal.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study concludes that the e-Sambat application has demonstrated moderate effectiveness in improving public complaint services in Pasuruan City, as reflected in Gibson's five indicators of organizational effectiveness –

productivity, efficiency, satisfaction, adaptation, and development – although challenges remain in system optimization, user adaptation, and participatory engagement. **Implication** : The findings imply that while e-Sambat has successfully opened digital access to complaint services and enhanced service responsiveness, its long-term success depends on continuous system improvement, stronger government socialization efforts, and cross-sector collaboration to address digital literacy gaps and ensure broader community participation. **Limitation** : However, the study is limited by its reliance on qualitative assessment and a single case study context, which restricts the ability to generalize the results and fully capture user experiences quantitatively. **Future Research** : Further studies should employ mixed-method approaches across multiple municipalities to evaluate user satisfaction, digital readiness, and institutional adaptability, while also exploring strategies for sustainable development of digital complaint systems in public service innovation.

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