Digitalization of Public Services: Comparing Public Grievance Platforms in Malang, Surakarta, and Bogor

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Abstract

The digitalization of public services is a critical component in the evolution of government administration in the digital era. The purpose of this study is to conduct a comparative study of digital public grievance platforms in three Indonesian cities: Malang, Surakarta, and Bogor. This study employs qualitative method with content analysis via an in-depth examination of official city government websites related to public grievance platforms in the three cities. Information service quality, user engagement and grievance handling are assessed. The findings of this study reveal the pluses and minuses in the three cities' use of digital public complaint platforms. Our findings reveal how Ulas By Surakarta City is the best among these three cities because of its high levels of engagement, with quick response times and a focus on transparency. Meanwhile in Malang City and Bogor Regency, while functioning well, faces challenges in increasing user engagement and transparency levels. These findings shed light on the role of digital citizen grievance platforms in connecting governments and citizens. The findings of this study suggest that adequate resources, digital literacy, effective communication, and a supportive organizational culture are critical for maximizing the positive impact of digitalization in public administration.

Keywords: Public grievance; public complaint; digital services; e-government

INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by rapid technological advances and digital transformation, the public administration landscape is undergoing major changes (Kusumasari et al., 2023). ICT allows citizens to use the internet to contact governments and express their appeals, complaints, suggestions, and opinions. It also helps governments be more efficient and direct citizens to their websites for information and application (Hassan, 2010; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). The integration of digital technology into various aspects of government has opened new avenues for citizen engagement, accountability, and transparency. One significant development in this regard is the emergence of digital public grievance platforms or services. These platforms serve as important channels for citizens to voice their concerns, seek redress for their grievances, and actively participate in the decision-making process in their respective cities (Hossain et al., 2023).

The digital transformation of public services reflects a paradigm shift in the way governments interact with their citizens. It has been highlight since public complaints or petitions have been widely examined as one of the most important contemporary forms of political participation (Bae et al., 2023). The emergence of the internet and the

proliferation of smartphones has driven the adoption of digital technology in all aspects of public administration. Digital citizen grievance platforms empower citizens by providing a convenient and accessible channel to voice their concerns (Desouza & Bhagwatwar, 2012). By offering a platform for the public to report problems, provide input, and seek information, the government can bridge the gap between the government and the public (Ubaldi, 2013). This increased engagement strengthens democracy and identifies areas for improvement. If properly designed and managed, citizen grievance platforms will increase transparency by making government actions, decisions, and responses to citizen concerns public. When people can track their complaints or learn how an issue is being handled, government trust and accountability increase. The data from public grievance platforms helps governments identify systemic issues. Instead of just addressing individual grievances, the government can analyse this complaint to address the root cause, improving public services more effectively and sustainably. The substance of these grievance websites differs from conventional petitions to bureaus, as, as in China, people who complain mostly about the quality of public services obtained (Göbel & Li, 2021). On the other hand, efficiency in service delivery is a characteristic of a well-functioning government. Digital complaint platforms enable governments to simplify their processes by directly addressing concerns raised by the public. This not only results in quicker resolution of issues but also reduces the administrative burden associated with handling grievances through traditional channels, such as paper forms or in-person visits. An efficient procedure for resolving complaints is required for the delivery of good public services. As a result, governments focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of their service delivery on a regular basis (Ali et al., 2023).

Research evaluating the performance of government websites platform has previously been carried out by several previous authors (Erwin et al., 2019; Lee-Geiller & Lee, 2019; Sajida et al., 2023). More specifically, evaluations of online grievance platforms in Indonesia are also widely carried out (Anggareska & Purwarianti, 2014; Lorensa & Sari, 2020; Rohmatun et al., 2017; Sansena, 2021; Sitompul et al., 2019; Toyyibah et al., 2023; Yohanitas & Prayitno, 2014). However previous research only using one point of view that mostly looking at the technology sistem that carry out, or proposing idea for public grievance platform. Meanwhile, study that open comparisons on several websites are still limited. Therefore, this study wil fulfil this gap by providing the extensive comparison from three cities in Indonesia. In the Indonesian context, the cities of Malang, Surakarta, and Bogor are examples of cities that have adopted digitalization at various levels. Each city has its own set of tactics for adopting digital citizen complaints platforms. By exploring these instances, we would like to give insight into how cities manage the digital environment to handle public complaints and inspire involvement. As we engage on this comparative analysis, it is critical to point out the importance of understanding the varied tactics and outcomes of digital citizen complaint platforms in these cities. Therefore, the primary goal of this study is to investigate how digital citizen grievance forums affect citizen involvement, government efficiency, and transparency in the setting of Indonesian public administration. It

intends to analyze and assess these platforms in different cities in order to give policymakers and administrators with insights and best practices, eventually contributing to the continuing discussion about strengthening government operations in the digital age. This knowledge may not only guide local policymakers and administrators, but it can also serve as a source of inspiration and best practises for cities throughout the world trying to enhance government in the digital era. We hope that this comparative study will provide a platform for future research and policymaking by analysing the continuous discourse of the digital age in public administration.

METHOD

This section presents a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology employed in this study, specifically emphasising the utilisation of content analysis as a means to examine and evaluate public grievance platforms in the chosen cities of Malang, Surakarta, and Bogor. We employ qualitative methodologies involving content analysis. Content analysis is a methodical and organised approach to examining and interpreting the textual and visual data found on these platform websites (Karlsson & Sjøvaag, 2016; Lewis et al., 2013; Stemler, 2015). This methodology facilitated the acquisition of comprehensive understanding pertaining to the attributes, functionalities, user guidelines, and overall user satisfaction provided by digital platforms for citizen grievances across various cities. The initial phase of our data collection procedure involved a meticulous process of city selection for the purpose of inclusion in the study. This study will use Malang, Surakarta, and Bogor as examples due to scientific rationale and a unique combination of factors. The autonomous website structures of these three cities differ from the national "Lapor." platform, giving them a unique perspective on public grievance platforms. This allows for a deep exploration of localised citizen engagement and grievance resolution in Indonesia's decentralised governance. Second, these cities are strategically located in Java, a diverse province in population, socioeconomic conditions, and governance options. Due to their diversity, they are useful case studies for understanding how populous local governments use digital platforms to address citizen complaints and improve public service delivery. This study focuses on these cities to illuminate the nuances of digitalization and its effects on sub-national grievances management, improving our understanding of Indonesia's digital governance landscape.

After the selection of the cities, observation was conducted from the citizen grievance platforms associated with each city. The primary focus of our data collection was the analysis of official websites administered by the local governments of Malang and Surakarta City, and Bogor Regency. This paper presents an academic review of the Sambat Online platform in Malang (https://sambat.malangkota.go.id/) , Ulas for the Surakarta city (https://ulas.surakarta.go.id/) , and Laras Online (https://pengaduan.bogorkab.go.id/) from Bogor regency. The central focus of our methodology revolves around the examination of the informational content present on the websites of specifically chosen cities.

The assessment of the efficacy of public grievance platforms can be conducted through an evaluation of their respective functionalities. Currently, there is a scarcity of comprehensive studies that elucidate specific indicators pertaining to the analysis of public grievance platforms. Prior research primarily focused on government websites in a broad sense. Therefore, this study will incorporate and integrate prior methodologies from the fields of e-government (Khanra & Joseph, 2017; Wijatmoko, 2020), public service (Roslan et al., 2015), and website evaluation (Adam et al., 2019; Sajida et al., 2023), complaint handling systems (Ali et al., 2023). Consequently, this online public grievance service will be assessed based on three key factors: Information and Service Quality, User Engagement, and Complaint Handling. Public grievance platforms serve as a vital conduit for citizens to engage with government services and express their grievances. Hence, the evaluation of these platforms holds significant importance in facilitating efficient and accountable governance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The evaluation of the performance of the platform for a public complaints website requires the examination of a number of important indicators, each of which offers a unique point of view on the effectiveness of the platform. There is a wide variety of public complaints from citizens. Citizens regularly contact government representatives to express their dissatisfaction with a wide range of issues, such as terrible traffic, noise pollution, unpaid salaries, and so on. The majority of these issues are addressed by the government, which explains what actions it has taken or has not taken along with the rationale behind those decisions. It is possible for officials to inform citizens that their complaint is unjustified, lacks proof, or has been examined and proven to be valid, which will result in corrective action or punishment of the perpetrators (Göbel & Li, 2021).

Information Service Quality

First, the concept of "Information and Service Quality" refers to the accuracy, completeness, and applicability of the information that is provided on the platform, in addition to the level of service that is provided all throughout the procedure of filing and resolving complaints (Barnes & Vidgen, 2004; Li & Shang, 2020; Zaato et al., 2023). This procedure entails analyzing the accuracy of the platform with regard to the provision of instructions and guidelines, the degree to which it provides comprehensive information in connection with complaints, the extent to which the information aligns with user requirements, and the overall usability of the platform.

We begin by take a look at the homepage that has been provided. The information quality and service offerings of three distinct public grievance platforms, namely Sambat Online by Malang City, Ulas by Surakarta City, and Laras Online by Bogor Regency, are analyzed, and a number of significant differences are found to exist between the three. The user-friendly interface of the Sambat Online by Malang City platform includes a streamlined menu that includes categories such as "Beranda" (Home), "FAQ," "Alur Aplikasi" (Application Process), and "Berita" (News). This variety of options demonstrates a clear emphasis on providing critical information and

making it easier for customers to report complaints. The use of simplicity in design has the potential to improve the overall experience of using the product and make navigation easier.
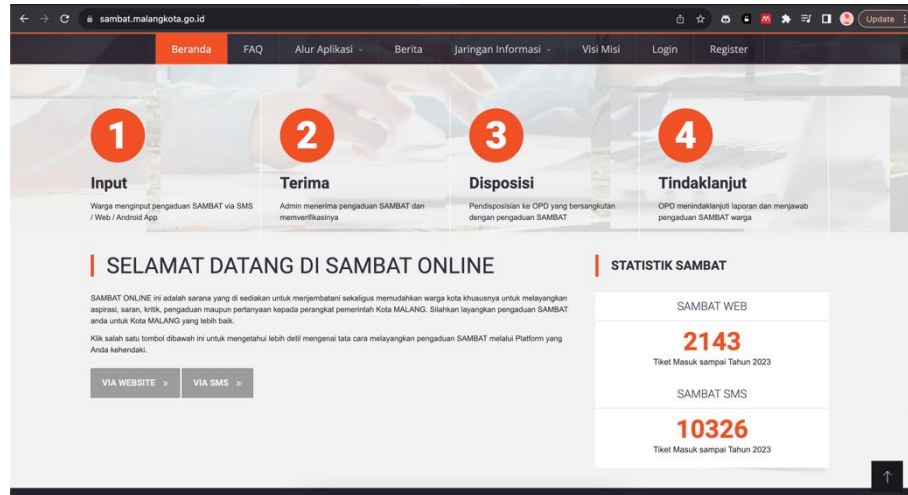
Figure 1. Home Interface of Sambat Online by Malang City Government

In contrast, Ulas By Surakarta City provides a more extensive selection of alternatives, encompassing clear guidelines for submitting complaints and opportunities for active user participation through features such as "Aspirasi" (Aspiration) and "Kirim Aspirasi." (Send Aspiration). The use of the term "Helpdesk" implies a dedication to providing assistance and support to users. This methodology has the potential to enhance user involvement and contentment, especially for those who desire extensive support and direction.
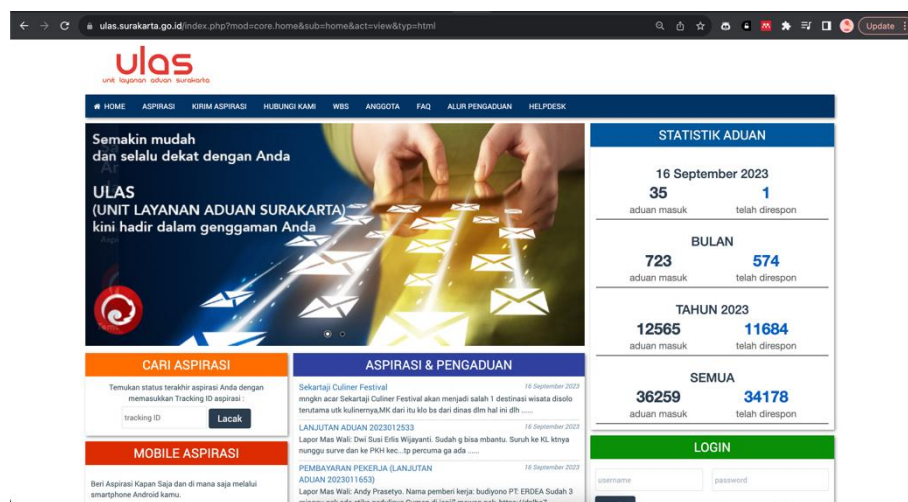

Figure 2. Home Interface of Ulas by Surakarta City Government

Finally, the Laras Online of Bogor Regency platform offers a selection of options on its menu, including "Beranda" (Home), "Sms Centre," "Aspirasi Web & Mobile," and "Panduan" (Guidelines). The presence of the "Situs Resmi Kabupaten Bogor" (Official Website of Bogor Regency) indicates a connection to the official government website, maybe with the intention of incorporating the complaint platform into a wider range of government services. The superiority of one platform over the

other ultimately hinges upon the distinct requirements and inclinations of individual users. Sambat Online by Malang City has a notable proficiency in its simplicity and accessibility, whereas Ulas By Surakarta City places a more emphasis on providing detailed instruction and fostering user involvement. Laras Online byBogor Regency is designed to seamlessly connect with official resources, catering to consumers who are in need of a comprehensive government service experience. The strengths of each platform are in accordance with specific user expectations and techniques employed by local governments, underscoring the need of customising complaint systems to suit local settings.
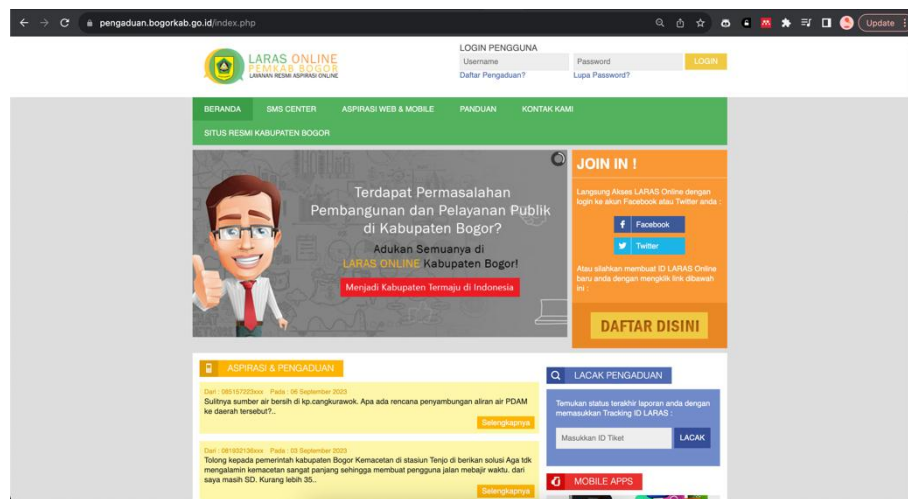
Figure 3. Home Interface of Laras Online by Bogor Regency City Government

In the context of Information Service Quality pertaining to a public grievance platform, it is important to guarantee that customers are provided with seamless and effortless means to lodge complaints and get technical support, should the need arise. At Sambat Online by Malang City, the absence of dedicated services to address issues such as mistakes or technical difficulties encountered when utilising the complaint platform has been observed. The quality of information services may be impacted by this phenomenon, since users may experience frustration when faced with technological difficulties beyond their ability to troubleshoot. Despite the presence of contact information on the website, the platform might enhance its information services by offering more readily accessible helpdesk features or technical problem reporting services. In contrast, Ulas By Surakarta and Laras Online Bogor Regency have implemented a commendable measure by incorporating a helpdesk function that facilitates users in seeking technical support through email correspondence. This enhances accessibility and enhances the quality of information services, hence fostering a sense of support among users while utilising the complaint platform. Therefore, the inclusion of this helpdesk function has a favourable impact on the overall Information Service Quality of both platforms, since helpdesk is importance part of e-government (Islam et al., 2012; Verdegem & Verleye, 2009).

User Engagement

Engagement pertains to the extent of user interaction and involvement with the platform (Ahmad & Abdullah, 2021; Helberger et al., 2018). This phenomenon can be discerned through the examination of website traffic and visitor statistics to ascertain the frequency of user engagement. Additionally, an investigation into the presence of features that foster user involvement, such as complaint submission forms can provide further insights. When comparing the three public grievance platforms, it is noteworthy to emphasise that Sambat Online by Malang City and Ulas By Surakarta City exhibit a commendable level of openness by providing comprehensive statistical data on the quantity of complaints received and addressed. However, Laras Online by Bogor Regency falls short in terms of statistical transparency in this regard. The lack of statistical data pertaining to Laras Online by Bogor Regency may have implications for users' capacity to assess the efficacy and responsiveness of the platform. Access to real-time data may be beneficial for users as it promotes transparency and fosters trust in the platform's capacity to effectively address and resolve issues in a timely manner. Hence, the inclusion of statistical data on Sambat Online by Malang City and Ulas By Surakarta City enhances their efficacy in presenting consumers a comprehensive understanding of the platform's performance. Laras Online by Bogor Regency might potentially improve its service provision and user confidence by adopting a similar approach. The importance of the inclusion of these statistical data is that the objective is for the design to embody the principles of transparent public information that are enlightening for the general public (Nupikso, 2015; Yakob & Pinem, 2023). As depicted in Figure 4, users, in this case the citizen, have direct access to the statistical display of complaints received and responded.
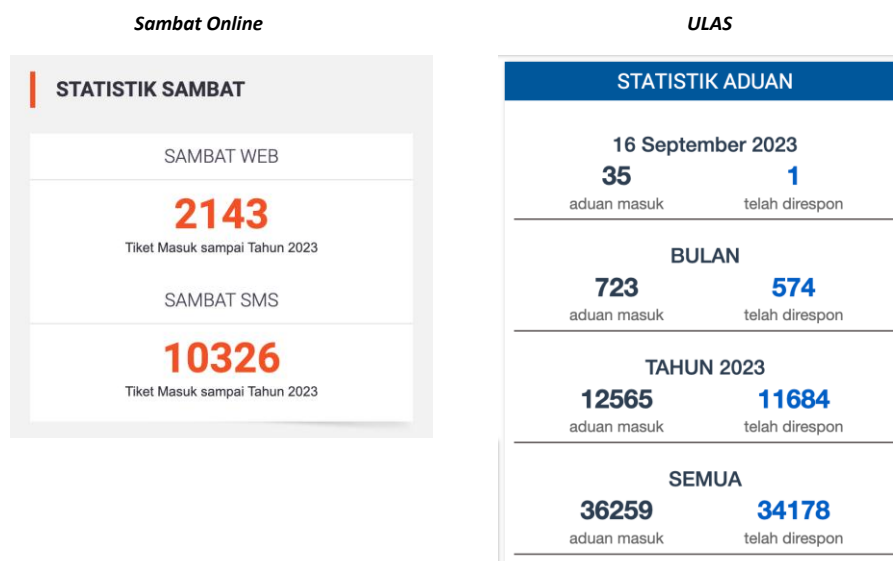

Figure 4. Statistic of Public Complaint data of Sambat Online and Ulas

Complaint Handling

Finally, the evaluation of complaint handling assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the process used to resolve complaints. The process entails the examination of the platform's response to user (Filip, 2013). This facilitates the enhancement of interactions between citizens and the government, as well as the improvement of public service quality. The evaluation of complaints handling on government public grievance platforms has great importance for a variety of convincing rationales. First and foremost, it assumes a crucial function in guaranteeing the proficient administration of complaints within the public sector, so making a significant contribution to the promotion of good governance and the successful provision of services (Brewer, 2007). The effective handling of complaints can also have a significant impact on restoring public confidence, as a well-structured mechanism for addressing grievances showcases responsibility and dedication to the welfare of citizens (Ali et al., 2023). The implementation of formalised complaint procedures inside institutions is a crucial element in the improvement of public programmes and the refinement of government practises (Hossain et al., 2023). Public accountability and input are facilitated through these channels, enabling the government to evaluate and improve services. Furthermore, it is important to recognise the significance of fair and equitable complaint handling processes in maintaining public trust in the overall complaint resolution system. These processes play a vital role in upholding the integrity and efficacy of government complaint management. Complaint handling assessment on public grievance platforms of government is important to ensure effective service, generate ideas for improvement, revitalize public trust, and maintain public confidence in the complaint handling process.

Within the framework of the Complaint Handling method, the establishment of an efficient and open complaint handling system assumes a crucial role in fostering public confidence in governmental entities and public sector institutions. A comparative study was conducted to examine three complaint platforms in distinct locations, namely Sambat ONLine in Malang City, ULAS in Surakarta City, and Laras Online in Bogor Regency. This analysis sheds light on the manner in which local governments respond to and handle complaints. About the complaint received management, SAMBAT Online accepts complaints via a web application, SMS, and Android app. This multi-channel strategy improves user accessibility, guaranteeing that anyone may utilise the platform comfortably based on their preferences. However, the data does not expressly address the comprehensiveness and correctness of the information offered on SAMBAT Online, which are important variables in determining the quality of information services. Furthermore, while there is information regarding the process flow, no direct feedback method is indicated, which may limit the platform's capacity to enhance its services based on customer concerns. ULAS by Surakarta City provides a clear step-by-step approach for reporting complaints on its website. The portal also describes the legal foundation, methods, and obligations involved in processing complaints, providing consumers with detailed information. The straightforward approach and the existence of

an online feedback tool indicate a dedication to information service quality (Al-Naimat et al., 2020; Sajida et al., 2023). However, there is no indication of alternate channels, which may limit accessibility for some users. Laras Online by by Bogor Regency is mostly an SMS-based system that emphasises the significance of delivering courteous and engaging messages. While this strategy appeals to users who prefer SMS communication, it may hinder accessibility for others who prefer web-based systems. The site also encourages users to report improper messages, which can improve the quality of information and service by maintaining a courteous communication environment.

SAMBAT Online shines ahead in terms of precision by providing exact and well-defined methods for reporting complaints, maintaining clarity in both its online and SMS channels. Furthermore, ULAS and Laras Online exhibit a dedication to precision by establishing specific complaint filing methods. This careful approach improves the user experience and assists individuals in properly navigating the complaint procedure. Furthermore, all three platforms demonstrate a notable level of comprehensiveness in their complaint-handling systems. They handle the whole complaint-handling cycle by covering critical steps such as verification, disposal, and follow-up by the necessary authorities. Notably, ULAS goes above and above by giving additional information regarding the legal framework and standard operating procedures, strengthening its all-encompassing approach. Furthermore, the material available on SAMBAT Online, ULAS, and Laras Online is relevant to the unique demands of their respective user bases. These platforms, which focus exclusively on complaints about local governments, display a great knowledge of their consumers' needs and offer information that directly addresses those needs. SAMBAT Online and ULAS excel in terms of accuracy by providing clear and explicit instructions for registering complaints, ensuring that users are well-informed and confident in their interactions with the platform. Furthermore, Laras Online prioritises message correctness, emphasising the necessity of delivering courteous and ethical SMS messages, which improves the overall quality of information and service. While the platforms do not expressly address usability, the lack of complex or unclear processes suggests that they were most likely created with usability in mind. This user-centered approach is critical in ensuring that citizens can simply access and use the platforms, resulting in a great user experience.

In the Sambat Online platform in Malang City, there exists a certain degree of transparency limits regarding the progress of complaints. This is due to the fact that access to information regarding the status of complaints is restricted solely to the user who initiated the complaint, since it is only accessible through the "SAMBAT ID Ticket / LAPOR ID" link. This highlights the necessity for enhancing the provision of access to complaints answers and progress for the general public, as it is a crucial component of an efficient Complaint Handling strategy.

Figure 5. Update Report Interface of Sambat Online by Malang City Government

On the other hand, Ulas By Surakarta City has implemented a more progressive approach in enhancing openness and responsiveness towards public grievances. These reports not only demonstrate the government's prompt and effective reaction, attitude, and Office of Professional Development (OPD), but also offer a concise overview of grievances that are accessible to the general public. Therefore, this platform not only facilitates a more efficient utilisation of Complaint Handling but also fosters a significant degree of openness to the general public, a crucial factor in establishing and nurturing confidence. As seen on figure 6, that record of complaint is provided transparently on Ulas by Surakarta City. Transparent, effective, and efficient complaint services make it easier for the public to report complaints and indirectly improve public services (Hapsari & Rachmawati, 2018; Warjiyono et al., 2020).

Figure 6. Record of Complaint in Ulas by Surakarta City Government

In addition, Laras Online Bogor Regency provides a complaint tracking feature which facilitates users in monitoring the advancement of their concerns. In addition to its primary functions, this platform also offers transparent access to information on the government's handling of public grievances and the subsequent dispositions. This fosters a high degree of transparency and enhances public comprehension of the Complaint Handling procedure.
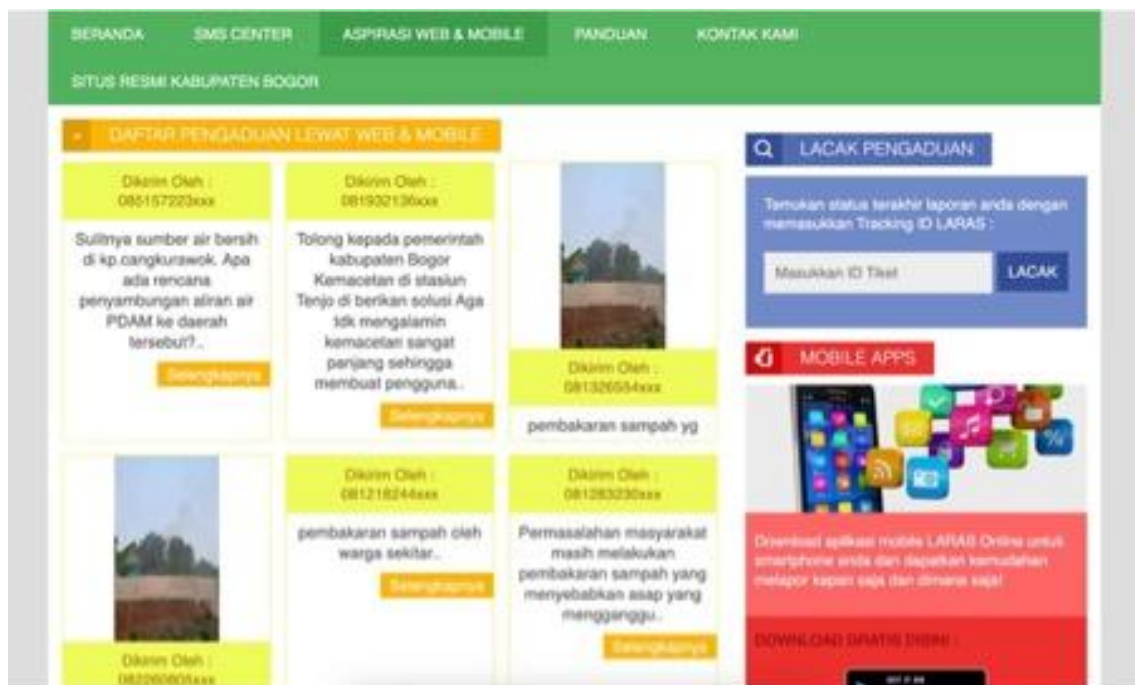
Figure 7. Record of Complaint in Laras Online by Bogor Regency Government

This research demonstrates that in order to enhance efficiency and accountability in managing complaints, complaint platforms must take into account many crucial factors, such as ensuring information accessible for the wider public, providing comprehensive complaint summaries, and offering complaint tracking functionalities. Enhancing comprehension of individuals' requirements and facilitating enhanced availability of information pertaining to grievances can contribute to the enhancement of interactions between citizens and government entities, hence elevating the general standard of public services. This objective aligns with the fundamental aim of an efficacious Complaint Handling strategy. Government should be using accommodative strategy to response in complaint handling. Instead of rejecting the issue or putting their own interests first, organisations that use an accommodating response approach demonstrate that they put the interests of complainers first, convey their compassion with the situation at hand, and endeavour to solve their problem (Huibers & Verhoeven, 2014; Jacobs & Liebrecht, 2023)

The Need of Improvement

Based on the analysis of the three public grievance platforms, Sambat Online by Malang City, Ulas By Surakarta City, and Laras Online by Bogor Regency, it's evident that each platform has its strengths and areas for improvement. For Sambat Online, this platform excels in simplicity and accessibility (Tolle et al., 2020). Its user-friendly interface and streamlined menu prioritize providing crucial information and facilitating complaint reporting, making it highly user-centric. Meanwhile, Ulas by Surakarta stands out for its comprehensive guidelines and active user engagement features, also the statistic of complaint data. The inclusion of a helpdesk function indicates a commitment to user support, which enhances user involvement. Moreover, Laras Online by Bogor Regency, while it connects seamlessly with official resources, it might be less user-friendly for those who prefer web-based systems. However, it caters to users seeking a comprehensive government service experience.

There are also several improvement suggestions here. Start from the information Service Quality, Sambat Online by Malang City should consider adding dedicated services to address technical issues and enhance user support. Providing more accessible helpdesk features or technical problem reporting services would enhance user satisfaction. To improve the information service quality, For Ulas By Surakarta City and Laras Online by Bogor Regency, continuing to offer helpdesk functions through email correspondence is essential to maintain user support and improve overall information service quality. Then, in the user Engagement, Laras Online could improve user engagement by providing comprehensive statistical data on the quantity of complaints received and addressed, similar to Sambat Online by Malang City and Ulas By Surakarta City. Accessible real-time data promotes transparency and builds trust in the platform's efficiency. Furthermore, in complaint Handling, To enhance complaint handling, all platforms should prioritize transparency in the progress of complaints. Sambat Online by Malang City should consider providing access to complaints' answers and progress for the general public, not just the complainants. Ulas By Surakarta City's approach to offering prompt and effective responses with public access is commendable and should continue. Laras Online by Bogor Regency's complaint tracking feature and transparent access to complaint information should be maintained and further improved.

These platforms enhance open governance by ensuring transparency in the management of complaints, which is a crucial element of effective governance (Brewer, 2007; Tavares & da Cruz, 2020). The demand for increased transparency in the tracking of complaints, along with the sharing of complaint data, aligns with the wider discussion on government responsibility and the implementation of open governance principles (Deligiaouri, 2013). Hence, the functioning and enhancement of these platforms not only tackle practical concerns but also adhere to theoretical foundations associated with user-centered design, e-participation, and open governance. This ultimately contributes to the progress of administration and democratic principles in the digital era (Chaudhary & Sugandhar, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Public grievance platforms should focus on improving information service quality, increasing user engagement through data transparency, and ensuring efficient and transparent complaint handling processes. By addressing these areas, these platforms can better serve citizens and enhance public service quality while fostering trust and confidence in government entities. Additionally, adopting an accommodating response strategy, as mentioned in the research, can further improve the complaint-handling process by prioritizing the interests of complainants and demonstrating empathy in resolving their issues. The study also identifies several future research opportunities, such as longitudinal research, citizen behaviour analysis, and cross-city research for knowledge exchange and best practises in digital public services. Further research also could mapping what kind of complaint content in each platform by scraping those data.

The findings of this study point to several important research directions. Improving citizen information services should be the first priority for public complaint platforms. Better, more accurate, and more easily accessible information can increase citizen participation. Second, increased data transparency should boost user and citizen participation in government decision-making. Monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement are all required for efficient and transparent complaint management. Handle public complaints in a more friendly and empathetic manner to increase citizen trust and satisfaction. Longitudinal trends, citizen behavior on the platform, and city-to-city comparisons could all be investigated in the future to share knowledge and best practices. Finally, gathering and analyzing complaint data to map the most common or dominant complaint content on each platform can aid in the identification of citizen issues and areas for improvement. By implementing these recommendations, future research should improve public complaint platforms, public services, and citizens' trust in government.

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