

Good Governance and Public Service Performance in Indonesia: A Secondary Data Analysis of Accountability, Digital Government, and Service Quality

Shelina Amalia¹, Abdul Sahid², Ambo Masse³

¹Undergraduate Student, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi YAPPI Makassar, Indonesia

^{2,3}Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi YAPPI Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract

Good governance is widely presented as a normative foundation for improving public-sector performance, yet its practical relationship with public service quality is not always straightforward. This study examines the implementation of good governance in Indonesian public service delivery using secondary data only. A descriptive-integrative secondary data design was employed by synthesizing official government statistics, regulatory documents, Ombudsman reports, international governance frameworks, and peer-reviewed literature. The principal empirical sources include the national Public Service Index (Indeks Pelayanan Publik/IPP), the Electronic-Based Government System Index (Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik/SPBE), the 2024 public service compliance assessment of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, and national regulations governing public services and digital government. The results show measurable progress in several governance-related indicators. The national IPP increased from 3.93 in 2023 to 4.02 in 2024, while the national SPBE Index rose from 2.26 in 2020 to 3.12 in 2024. Ombudsman data also indicate that the number of assessed entities classified in the green zone increased from 179 in 2021 to 494 in 2024, representing approximately 84.16% of the 587 entities assessed in 2024. Nevertheless, more than 10,000 public reports were resolved and approximately 112,000 consultations were received by the Ombudsman during 2024, with local governments remaining the most frequently reported institutions. These findings suggest that Indonesia has strengthened formal compliance, service standards, and digital administrative capacity, but persistent complaints and maladministration risks reveal an implementation gap between institutional reform and citizens' service experiences.

Keywords: good governance; public service; accountability; responsiveness; digital government

1. Introduction

Good governance has become one of the most influential concepts in contemporary public administration and development policy. It is commonly associated with the quality of institutions, the legitimacy of decision-making, administrative accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, rule of law, equity, and the capacity of government to translate policy commitments into public value. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2009) identifies eight interrelated characteristics of good governance: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability. This formulation is especially relevant to public service delivery because citizens encounter governance not only through political institutions but also through routine administrative interactions such as licensing, civil registration, health services, education, social assistance, taxation, and complaint handling.

The conceptual breadth of good governance, however, creates an analytical problem. Governance can easily become a catch-all term in which almost every desirable feature of government is treated as part of the concept. Grindle (2004) warns that the good governance agenda may become unrealistically extensive, particularly in developing countries where institutional reform is constrained by limited administrative capacity, competing priorities, and uneven implementation. Fukuyama (2013) similarly argues that governance should not be assessed only through outputs; bureaucratic capacity, professionalism, and institutional autonomy are also central to understanding government quality. Rothstein and Teorell (2008) add that impartiality in the exercise of public authority is a core component of quality of government. These arguments imply that public service performance should be evaluated not merely by whether services are delivered, but also by how they are delivered and whether

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

administrative processes are fair, accountable, transparent, and responsive.

Public service delivery is therefore a critical arena for testing whether good governance operates in practice. Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) emphasize that public administration should serve citizens rather than merely steer organizational processes, while Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg (2014) argue that public institutions are responsible for creating and safeguarding public value in collaboration with citizens and other actors. From this perspective, service users are not passive recipients. Their access to information, ability to participate, capacity to submit complaints, and experience of fair treatment are part of the governance process itself. Good governance in public services thus combines administrative competence with democratic and ethical values.

In Indonesia, the legal architecture of public service governance is relatively well developed. Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services establishes standards, rights and obligations, information systems, complaint management, performance assessment, citizen participation, and sanctions within public service delivery. The law explicitly links public service improvement to the principles of good government and to the protection of citizens from abuse of authority. Digital transformation has subsequently become another major reform instrument. Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018 concerning the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) provides the national framework for integrating information and communication technology into government administration and public services. These reforms reflect an institutional commitment to improve efficiency, accessibility, transparency, and coordination.

Recent national indicators suggest that several aspects of public service administration have improved. The Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform reported a national Public Service Index (IPP) of 4.02 in 2024, exceeding the target of 4.00 and rising from 3.93 in the previous year (Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, 2025a). The national SPBE Index also increased to 3.12 in 2024 and was categorized as good, following a value of 2.79 in 2023 (Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, 2025b). Ombudsman assessments likewise show a marked increase in public service providers classified in the green zone. These indicators could be read as evidence of governance improvement. Yet aggregate scores cannot by themselves establish that citizens consistently experience responsive, impartial, and accountable services.

The persistence of complaints and maladministration is important in this regard. The Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia reported that it resolved more than 10,000 public reports and received approximately 112,000 consultations in 2024, while local governments remained the most frequently reported institutions (Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025). Such evidence indicates that institutional reform and formal compliance can coexist with implementation problems. The analytical issue is therefore not whether governance indicators are improving, but whether different types of secondary evidence point toward a coherent improvement in the substantive quality of public service governance.

This study addresses that issue by examining good governance and public service performance in Indonesia through a secondary data analysis. It focuses on three linked questions: (1) what trends are visible in selected official indicators of public service quality and digital government; (2) how do these trends relate to good governance principles such as effectiveness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, participation, and impartiality; and (3) what implementation gaps remain when administrative performance indicators are compared with complaint and maladministration evidence? By integrating quantitative indicators with regulatory and institutional evidence, the study aims to provide a more balanced interpretation of governance reform than one based on a single performance index.

The contribution of the study is primarily analytical rather than causal. It does not claim that digital government, compliance assessment, or any particular reform independently causes better public services. Instead, it uses multiple secondary sources to identify convergence and tension between formal governance capacity and citizen-facing service performance. This distinction is important because improvements in administrative systems may be necessary for good governance without being sufficient to guarantee it.

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

2. Methods

This study used a descriptive-integrative secondary data analysis. No primary survey, interview, observation, experiment, or field data were collected. The unit of analysis was the governance of public service delivery in Indonesia, with emphasis on national-level indicators and institutional evidence that could be connected to established dimensions of good governance.

Secondary sources were selected purposively according to four criteria: authority, relevance, traceability, and analytical complementarity. First, official national sources were prioritized for empirical indicators and regulatory information. These included the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, and the national legal database. Second, international institutional sources were used to define governance dimensions and provide comparative conceptual reference points, particularly UNESCAP, the World Bank, and the OECD. Third, peer-reviewed public administration and governance literature was used to interpret the relationship between administrative capacity, impartiality, public value, citizen orientation, and governance reform. Fourth, only sources whose institutional origin, publication information, or DOI could be verified were incorporated into the synthesis.

The principal quantitative evidence consisted of three sets of indicators. The first was the national IPP, which measures public service performance across dimensions including service policy, human-resource professionalism, facilities, service information systems, consultation and complaint management, and innovation. The second was the national SPBE Index, which evaluates electronic-based government implementation. For temporal interpretation, the analysis used the national SPBE series for 2020-2024 reported by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform: 2.26, 2.24, 2.34, 2.79, and 3.12, respectively. The third set comprised the Ombudsman's 2024 compliance assessment, including the distribution of 587 assessed entities across service-quality zones and the reported increase in green-zone entities from 179 in 2021 to 494 in 2024.

Qualitative documentary evidence included Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018 on SPBE, the Ombudsman's 2024 annual reporting, and governance frameworks from UNESCAP, the World Bank, and the OECD. These documents were not treated as equivalent to citizen-level outcome data. Instead, they were used to identify formal institutional expectations, governance principles, oversight mechanisms, and administrative reform directions.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, quantitative indicator trends were summarized descriptively without inferential statistical testing because the available national series represent administrative performance measures rather than a probability sample designed for causal inference. Second, evidence was mapped onto six governance dimensions derived from the literature: effectiveness and efficiency, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, participation, and impartiality/rule of law. Third, the analysis compared converging and diverging signals across sources. An improvement in administrative scores was interpreted as evidence of institutional progress only when the corresponding governance mechanism could be identified. Persistent complaints, maladministration risks, or uneven compliance were treated as evidence of implementation gaps rather than as proof that the entire reform agenda had failed.

This design has limitations. Aggregate indices compress multiple dimensions into summary scores and may conceal variation across sectors, regions, agencies, and user groups. Ombudsman reports capture reported or detected problems rather than the total incidence of maladministration. In addition, the study cannot establish causal relationships between digitalization, governance principles, and service outcomes. The findings should therefore be understood as a triangulated descriptive assessment based on secondary evidence, not as a causal impact evaluation.

3. Results

3.1 Improvement in formal public service performance

The first pattern is an improvement in formal measures of public service performance. The national IPP reached 4.02 in 2024, compared with 3.93 in 2023. The 2024 value was reported in the very good range and slightly exceeded the national target of 4.00. The IPP is particularly relevant to good governance because it does not measure service output alone; its construction incorporates service policy, professionalism of personnel, facilities, information systems, consultation and complaint mechanisms,

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

and innovation. An increase in the index therefore suggests improvement in the administrative infrastructure surrounding service delivery, although the aggregate value does not demonstrate uniform performance across all agencies or local governments.

From a governance perspective, the IPP trend is most directly connected to effectiveness, responsiveness, transparency, and accountability. Service standards and information systems can reduce uncertainty for users; complaint mechanisms create an avenue for administrative responsiveness; and professional human resources support more reliable implementation. However, because the index is an administrative performance measure, it should not be treated as a direct measurement of citizen trust or as conclusive evidence of impartial treatment.

Table 1. Selected secondary indicators of public service governance in Indonesia

Indicator	Period / observation	Reported result	Governance relevance
National Public Service Index (IPP)	2023 to 2024	3.93 to 4.02	Service quality, professionalism, information, complaints, innovation
National SPBE Index	2020 to 2024	2.26; 2.24; 2.34; 2.79; 3.12	Digital capacity, integration, efficiency, transparency potential
Ombudsman green-zone entities	2021 to 2024	179 to 494 entities	Compliance, service standards, accountability
Ombudsman assessment 2024	587 entities	494 green-zone entities (84.16%)	High or highest service-quality classification for most assessed entities
Ombudsman public reports / consultations	2024	More than 10,000 reports resolved; approximately 112,000 consultations	Persistent demand for oversight, redress, and complaint resolution

Source: Synthesized from Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (2025a, 2025b) and Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (2024, 2025).

3.2 Expansion of digital government capacity

The second pattern concerns the expansion of electronic-based government. The national SPBE Index increased from 2.26 in 2020 to 3.12 in 2024. The trajectory was not perfectly linear: the score declined slightly to 2.24 in 2021, increased to 2.34 in 2022, rose more substantially to 2.79 in 2023, and reached 3.12 in 2024. The Ministry reported that the 2024 evaluation covered 615 central and subnational government institutions and that 48 institutions received the highest performance predicate.

This trend indicates stronger administrative digitalization and institutionalization of electronic government. Digital systems can support good governance by reducing transaction costs, standardizing procedures, enabling service tracking, improving access to information, and creating electronic records that strengthen traceability. The legal foundation established through Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018 also positions SPBE as a government-wide reform rather than an isolated technology project.

Nevertheless, the data do not demonstrate that digitalization automatically produces responsive or equitable services. A higher SPBE score can coexist with fragmented user experiences, unequal digital access, weak interoperability at the service interface, or procedural complexity transferred from offline to online systems. The result should therefore be interpreted as evidence of improved digital governance capacity, not as a complete measure of good governance.

3.3 Stronger compliance accompanied by persistent oversight demand

The third pattern emerges from Ombudsman evidence. In the 2024 compliance assessment, 587 entities were evaluated. Of these, 337 entities (57.41%) were placed in the green zone with the highest quality classification and 157 entities (26.75%) were placed in the green zone with a high-quality classification. Combined, 494 entities—or approximately 84.16% of all assessed entities—were in the green zone. This represents a substantial increase from 179 green-zone entities in 2021.

The distribution indicates that formal compliance with public service requirements has broadened across government organizations. Because the Ombudsman assessment is linked to the implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009, the improvement is relevant to accountability, service standards, complaint mechanisms, and the prevention of maladministration. It also suggests that public organizations have increasingly institutionalized procedures expected by the national public service framework.

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

However, oversight data simultaneously reveal continuing governance problems. The Ombudsman's 2024 annual report states that more than 10,000 public reports were resolved and approximately 112,000 consultations were received during the year. Local governments were identified as the most frequently reported institutions. The existence of extensive complaint and consultation activity does not negate the improvement in compliance indicators, but it shows that citizens continue to encounter problems requiring external oversight or clarification. Good governance progress is therefore better characterized as partial and uneven than as complete.

3.4 Mapping the evidence to good governance dimensions

When the secondary evidence is mapped onto governance dimensions, the clearest progress appears in effectiveness and administrative capacity. Rising IPP and SPBE scores indicate stronger institutional systems for service provision and digital administration. Transparency is supported indirectly through service information systems and electronic government, while accountability is strengthened through service standards, performance evaluation, and Ombudsman oversight. Responsiveness is reflected in the formal presence of consultation and complaint mechanisms, although the volume of complaints indicates that responsiveness remains uneven in practice.

Participation is the least directly captured dimension in the available national indicators. Although Law No. 25 of 2009 recognizes community participation and complaint processes, aggregate IPP and SPBE scores do not show how substantively citizens influence service design or administrative decisions. Similarly, impartiality and rule of law are formally embedded in legal and oversight arrangements, but their practical realization cannot be inferred solely from administrative performance indices. This asymmetry is analytically important: the most measurable dimensions of governance are not necessarily the only dimensions that matter to citizens.

Table 2. Interpretation of secondary evidence through good governance dimensions

Governance dimension	Evidence of progress	Remaining limitation / risk
Effectiveness and efficiency	Rising IPP and SPBE scores; broader digital administration	Aggregate scores may hide agency and regional disparities
Transparency	Service information systems and digital platforms improve information availability and traceability	Information availability does not guarantee clarity, accessibility, or meaningful disclosure
Accountability	Ombudsman oversight, complaint mechanisms, service standards, performance evaluation	Persistent reports indicate continuing need for external correction and redress
Responsiveness	Consultation and complaint channels institutionalized in service frameworks	Large consultation and complaint volumes suggest uneven problem resolution at service level
Participation	Public Service Law recognizes community participation	National indices provide limited evidence of substantive citizen influence on service design
Impartiality / rule of law	Legal standards and oversight mechanisms define rights and administrative obligations	Administrative indices cannot confirm equal treatment across citizens and service contexts

Source: Author synthesis based on the secondary sources analyzed in this study.

4. Discussion

The results present a mixed but coherent picture of governance reform. Indonesia has made observable progress in administrative service performance, digital government, and compliance with public service standards. Yet the same evidence base also demonstrates why good governance should not be reduced to a single index or reform instrument. Higher IPP and SPBE scores capture important institutional improvements, but Ombudsman data show that service users still require extensive complaint handling, consultation, and external oversight. The central implication is that formal capacity and substantive governance quality are related but not identical.

This distinction is consistent with Fukuyama's (2013) argument that governance quality requires attention to state capacity rather than a simple reliance on output indicators. SPBE, for example, strengthens the administrative infrastructure through which services can be standardized and coordinated. Such capacity is necessary because fragmented systems, weak records, and inconsistent procedures undermine reliability. However, digital capacity does not determine whether administrators

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

respond fairly to a citizen, whether a complaint receives meaningful follow-up, or whether vulnerable groups can access a service. A digitally sophisticated bureaucracy can still perform poorly on responsiveness or equity if organizational incentives and frontline practices remain unchanged.

The findings also support Rothstein and Teorell's (2008) emphasis on impartiality. Good governance is not achieved merely when procedures exist; public authority must be exercised without inappropriate favoritism or discrimination. Indonesian public service law creates a legal foundation for this principle through service standards, rights, complaint procedures, and sanctions. Nevertheless, the available national indices do not directly measure impartial treatment. This creates a measurement gap. Administrative systems may become more efficient while variations in discretion, local capacity, or citizen access remain difficult to detect at the aggregate level.

Accountability appears comparatively well institutionalized in the formal architecture. The Ombudsman provides an external oversight mechanism, public service providers are evaluated, and complaint management is incorporated into national performance assessment. The increase from 179 green-zone entities in 2021 to 494 in 2024 is therefore significant. It indicates that compliance-oriented governance reforms have diffused across a much larger number of organizations. At the same time, the persistence of reports to the Ombudsman demonstrates that accountability mechanisms remain necessary precisely because internal administrative controls do not resolve every service failure.

This point should not be interpreted as contradictory. An increase in complaints can reflect poor service performance, greater public awareness, improved access to redress mechanisms, or some combination of these factors. Secondary data alone cannot determine which mechanism dominates. Consequently, complaint volume should not be used as a direct inverse measure of governance quality. Its analytical value lies in showing that citizens continue to experience uncertainty, dissatisfaction, or suspected maladministration at a scale that warrants institutional attention. A mature governance assessment must therefore consider both administrative achievement and the continuing demand for redress.

Responsiveness is particularly important because it connects institutional procedures to citizens' lived experience. OECD evidence emphasizes that reliability, responsiveness, integrity, openness, and fairness are key drivers of trust in public institutions (OECD, 2026). In practical terms, a citizen may judge a government agency less by the existence of a digital platform than by whether the agency solves the problem, explains decisions, treats the applicant fairly, and responds within a reasonable period. This reinforces the need to complement administrative indices with user-experience measures and complaint-resolution outcomes.

Participation presents another limitation in the current evidence architecture. UNESCAP (2009) treats participation as a central characteristic of good governance, and Indonesian public service law recognizes community participation. Yet national performance indices focus more strongly on organizational capability and compliance than on the depth of citizen influence. Consultation mechanisms may be present without significantly shaping service design, resource allocation, or organizational priorities. Future public service evaluation would therefore benefit from distinguishing procedural participation—such as the existence of consultation channels—from consequential participation, where citizen input can be shown to affect decisions or service redesign.

The relationship between digital government and good governance also requires a cautious interpretation. Digitalization can strengthen transparency by making procedures and information visible, improve efficiency by reducing repeated administrative transactions, and reinforce accountability through traceable electronic workflows. These are substantial governance benefits. However, digital government may reproduce existing bureaucratic complexity if procedures are merely transferred online. It can also create new exclusion risks for citizens with limited digital literacy, connectivity, documentation, or accessibility support. Thus, the governance value of SPBE depends on how technology changes administrative relationships, not simply on the technological sophistication of government systems.

The results resonate with Grindle's (2004) argument for prioritizing feasible and consequential governance reforms rather than pursuing an unlimited checklist of ideal institutions. In the Indonesian public service context, three priorities emerge from the evidence. First, government should continue strengthening administrative and digital capacity because service reliability depends on functioning systems. Second, reforms should focus more directly on complaint resolution, frontline responsiveness,

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

and inter-agency problem solving, where citizens experience governance in practice. Third, performance measurement should incorporate stronger indicators of fairness, accessibility, participation, and user experience so that governance improvement is not assessed only through organizational compliance.

The findings are also compatible with the New Public Service and public value perspectives. Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) argue that public servants should serve citizens rather than treat them as customers in a narrow market sense. Bryson et al. (2014) similarly emphasize democratic values and public value creation in a networked governance environment. These perspectives imply that a high-performing public service system must do more than deliver transactions efficiently. It should protect rights, explain decisions, enable participation, respond to feedback, and ensure that administrative innovation produces socially meaningful outcomes.

A central analytical conclusion is therefore that good governance in public service delivery is multidimensional and sequential. Administrative capacity enables reliable action; transparency makes processes visible; accountability establishes answerability and correction; responsiveness connects institutions with citizen needs; participation broadens the informational and democratic basis of service design; and impartiality ensures that authority is exercised fairly. Weakness in any one dimension can reduce the value generated by progress in others. For example, a transparent but unresponsive system may publish information without solving citizen problems, while an efficient but partial system may deliver services quickly yet unfairly.

For policy and administrative practice, the implication is to shift from a predominantly compliance-based interpretation of good governance toward an implementation-oriented approach. Compliance remains essential because service standards and legal obligations define minimum expectations. However, the next stage of reform should evaluate whether these standards are converted into consistent service encounters across locations and population groups. This requires disaggregated service data, stronger feedback loops, transparent reporting on complaint outcomes, accessibility audits, and mechanisms for identifying repeated causes of maladministration rather than addressing cases individually.

The study also highlights a research agenda. Future studies should combine national secondary indicators with subnational comparative data to examine whether improvements in SPBE, IPP, or accountability systems are associated with better user outcomes. Longitudinal designs could assess whether organizations that improve digital governance subsequently reduce processing time, complaints, or service disparities. Qualitative research could investigate why agencies with similar formal scores produce different citizen experiences. Such work would help move the good governance literature from broad normative claims toward more precise explanations of how institutional arrangements are translated into service performance.

5. Conclusion

This study examined good governance in Indonesian public service delivery using secondary data from official performance indicators, regulatory documents, oversight reports, international governance frameworks, and peer-reviewed literature. The evidence shows meaningful institutional progress. The national Public Service Index increased from 3.93 in 2023 to 4.02 in 2024, the national SPBE Index rose from 2.26 in 2020 to 3.12 in 2024, and the number of public service providers assessed in the Ombudsman's green zone increased from 179 in 2021 to 494 in 2024. These patterns indicate stronger formal service standards, administrative capacity, compliance, and digital governance. However, the persistence of substantial complaint and consultation activity demonstrates that institutional improvement has not eliminated maladministration risks or uneven service experiences. Good governance should therefore not be equated with digitalization, formal compliance, or a high aggregate performance score. It requires the simultaneous operation of effectiveness, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, participation, impartiality, and rule of law. For Indonesian public administration, the next stage of reform should focus on converting improvements in institutional systems into more consistent citizen-level outcomes, particularly through stronger complaint resolution, user-centered service design, equitable digital access, and performance measures that capture fairness and substantive responsiveness.

*Corresponding author: Abdul Sahid, Email: ilyassarome@gmail.com

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