



Digital capability of local government and citizen satisfaction in Vinh Long Province, Vietnam

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Abstract

In the context of digital transformation becoming a critical driver of public administration modernization, enhancing the digital capability of local governments has emerged as an urgent priority for improving public service delivery and increasing citizen satisfaction. This study examines the relationship between local government digital capability and citizen satisfaction in Vinh Long Province, Vietnam. Drawing on the theoretical foundations of digital government, public service quality, and citizen satisfaction, the study proposes a research framework comprising five dimensions of local government digital capability: digital infrastructure capability, digital human capability, digital data governance capability, digital public service delivery capability, and digital leadership capability. A quantitative research approach was employed through a survey of citizens who had used public administrative services, either online or offline, at government agencies in Vinh Long Province. The collected data were analyzed using reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings reveal that local government digital capability has a significant positive effect on citizen satisfaction, with digital public service delivery capability and digital data governance capability exerting the strongest influences. Based on these results, the study proposes several policy implications to strengthen the digital capability of local governments, thereby supporting the development of digital government, enhancing public governance effectiveness, and improving the quality of public services in the era of digital transformation.

Keywords: Digital capability, local government, citizen satisfaction, digital public services, digital government, Vinh Long Province

Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is reshaping public governance through the rapid advancement of digital technologies, particularly big data, artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT). In this context, digital transformation in the public sector is no longer merely an option for administrative improvement but has become a strategic imperative for enhancing governance effectiveness, administrative efficiency, and the quality of public service delivery. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), digital government refers to the use of digital technologies as an integrated component of government modernization strategies to create public value through data-driven governance, digitalized processes, and citizen-centered public service delivery (OECD, 2020) ^[1]. Likewise, the United Nations E-Government Survey reports that countries with more advanced digital government systems generally achieve greater efficiency in public service delivery, enhanced transparency, and higher levels of citizen satisfaction (United Nations, 2024) ^[2]. These developments demonstrate that digital capability extends beyond technological adoption to encompass institutional capacity, governance effectiveness, and the ability to create public value.

In Vietnam, digital transformation has been strongly promoted through the National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, with a vision toward 2030, which identifies digital government, digital economy, and digital society as the three strategic pillars of national development (Government of Vietnam, 2020) ^[14]. Among these pillars, digital government is considered fundamental to improving administrative efficiency and delivering citizen-centered

public services. Local governments play a particularly important role in this transformation because they serve as the primary interface between the government and citizens, handling administrative procedures and providing essential public services. Consequently, the digital capability of local governments has become a key determinant of the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of public service delivery, ultimately shaping citizens' experiences and satisfaction.

Despite significant investments in digital government initiatives, the implementation of digital transformation across Vietnamese local governments remains uneven. Many provinces have established online public service portals, electronic one-stop service systems, digital administrative records, and specialized databases. However, citizens still encounter various challenges when accessing digital public services due to limitations in technological infrastructure, fragmented data integration, inefficient administrative processes, and insufficient digital competencies among public officials. In Vinh Long Province, digital transformation has been prioritized through initiatives aimed at expanding digital infrastructure, digitizing administrative data, and increasing the availability of online public services. Nevertheless, there is limited empirical evidence regarding whether these initiatives have effectively improved citizen satisfaction. This raises an important research question: to what extent does local government digital capability enhance citizen satisfaction, and which dimensions of digital capability contribute most significantly to this relationship?

Existing international literature has extensively examined the relationships among e-government, public service quality, technology acceptance, and citizen satisfaction (Carter & Bélanger, 2005; Scott et al., 2016) ^[16, 12].

However, most studies emphasize the adoption and use of digital services rather than conceptualizing local government digital capability as a multidimensional organizational construct encompassing digital infrastructure, digital human capability, data governance, digital service delivery, and digital leadership. In Vietnam, empirical research on digital government has primarily focused on the national level or major metropolitan areas such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang. Studies investigating local governments in the Mekong Delta, particularly Vinh Long Province, remain scarce. Moreover, few quantitative studies have systematically examined how different dimensions of local government digital capability influence citizen satisfaction. This gap highlights the need for an empirical investigation that develops a comprehensive measurement framework for local government digital capability and evaluates its effects on citizen satisfaction within the context of local digital transformation.

Based on these research gaps, this study pursues three primary objectives. First, it seeks to identify and validate the key dimensions that constitute local government digital capability in the context of public sector digital transformation. Second, it examines the extent to which each dimension of digital capability influences citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in Vinh Long Province. Third, based on the empirical findings, the study proposes policy implications to strengthen local government digital capability, improve public service quality, enhance citizen satisfaction, and support the sustainable development of digital government at the local level.

Literature Review

1. Local Government Digital Capability

Digital transformation has become a strategic priority for governments seeking to improve governance effectiveness, administrative efficiency, and public service quality. Unlike traditional e-government, which primarily focuses on digitizing administrative procedures, digital government emphasizes organizational transformation through the integration of digital technologies, institutional reform, and citizen-centered service delivery (OECD, 2020). Consequently, governments are increasingly expected to develop organizational capabilities that enable them to effectively utilize digital technologies and create public value.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) argues that organizational performance depends on the effective utilization of valuable organizational resources (Barney, 1991; Bharadwaj, 2000). Extending this perspective, Dynamic Capability Theory suggests that organizations must continuously integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources to respond to rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). Within public administration, digital capability therefore represents the organizational ability to mobilize technological resources, human capital, data, and leadership to support digital transformation and improve governance performance.

Recent studies increasingly recognize digital capability as a multidimensional construct. Janowski (2015) argued that digital government evolves from electronic administration toward transformational governance, requiring not only technological infrastructure but also organizational innovation and institutional coordination. Similarly, Gil-

Garcia et al. (2018) emphasized that successful digital government depends on the interaction among digital infrastructure, organizational capability, leadership, and information management. Drawing upon these studies, this research conceptualizes local government digital capability as a multidimensional construct consisting of five dimensions: digital infrastructure capability, digital human capability, digital data governance capability, digital public service delivery capability, and digital leadership capability. Together, these dimensions represent the core organizational capabilities required for successful digital transformation in local governments.

2. Citizen Satisfaction and Digital Government

Citizen satisfaction is widely recognized as one of the most important indicators of public sector performance because it reflects citizens' overall evaluation of government services. According to Expectation Confirmation Theory, satisfaction results from the comparison between citizens' expectations and their actual experiences. Likewise, the SERVQUAL model proposes that service quality, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, is a primary determinant of customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988). These theories have been widely applied in public administration to evaluate the effectiveness of government service delivery.

With the rapid development of digital government, citizen satisfaction has become an important indicator for assessing the success of digital transformation initiatives. Previous studies have shown that governments providing efficient, transparent, accessible, and user-friendly digital services generally achieve higher levels of citizen satisfaction (Carter & Bélanger, 2005; Scott et al., 2016). Consequently, citizen satisfaction is adopted in this study as the key outcome variable reflecting the effectiveness of local government digital capability.

3. Local Government Digital Capability and Citizen Satisfaction

Existing studies generally suggest that digital capability positively influences public service quality and citizen satisfaction by improving administrative efficiency, transparency, and service accessibility. However, most previous research has focused on e-government adoption or information systems success rather than examining local government digital capability as an integrated organizational capability. Moreover, empirical evidence from provincial governments in developing countries remains limited.

Digital infrastructure capability provides the technological foundation for reliable digital public services. Stable information systems, secure digital platforms, and effective communication networks improve service accessibility and operational efficiency, thereby enhancing citizens' service experiences (Gil-Garcia et al., 2018; OECD, 2020). Therefore, stronger digital infrastructure capability is expected to improve citizen satisfaction.

Digital human capability reflects the ability of public officials to effectively utilize digital technologies and support citizens throughout administrative procedures. Public employees with stronger digital competencies are better able to deliver efficient, responsive, and citizen-oriented services, thereby increasing citizen satisfaction (Mergel et al., 2019).

Digital data governance capability enables governments to integrate, manage, and utilize digital information efficiently. Effective data governance improves interoperability among government agencies, reduces duplicated administrative procedures, strengthens transparency, and facilitates evidence-based decision-making. Consequently, better digital data governance contributes to more efficient public services and greater citizen satisfaction.

Digital public service delivery capability directly determines citizens' experiences with digital government. User-friendly online services, simplified administrative procedures, transparency, and service accessibility significantly improve citizens' perceptions of government performance. Previous studies consistently identify service quality as one of the strongest determinants of citizen satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Scott et al., 2016). Therefore, digital public service delivery capability is expected to exert a strong positive influence on citizen satisfaction.

Digital leadership capability supports organizational change by providing strategic direction, coordinating digital transformation initiatives, and fostering innovation within government organizations. Strong digital leadership enables governments to effectively mobilize resources, overcome institutional barriers, and sustain digital transformation,

thereby improving public service quality and citizen satisfaction.

Overall, although previous studies have confirmed the importance of digital transformation in public administration, few have examined how the multiple dimensions of local government digital capability jointly influence citizen satisfaction, particularly within the context of local governments in Vietnam. This study addresses this research gap by empirically examining the relationships between five dimensions of local government digital capability and citizen satisfaction in Vinh Long Province.

4. Research Hypotheses

Based on the preceding literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Digital infrastructure capability positively influences citizen satisfaction.

H2: Digital human capability positively influences citizen satisfaction.

H3: Digital data governance capability positively influences citizen satisfaction.

H4: Digital public service delivery capability positively influences citizen satisfaction.

H5: Digital leadership capability positively influences citizen satisfaction.

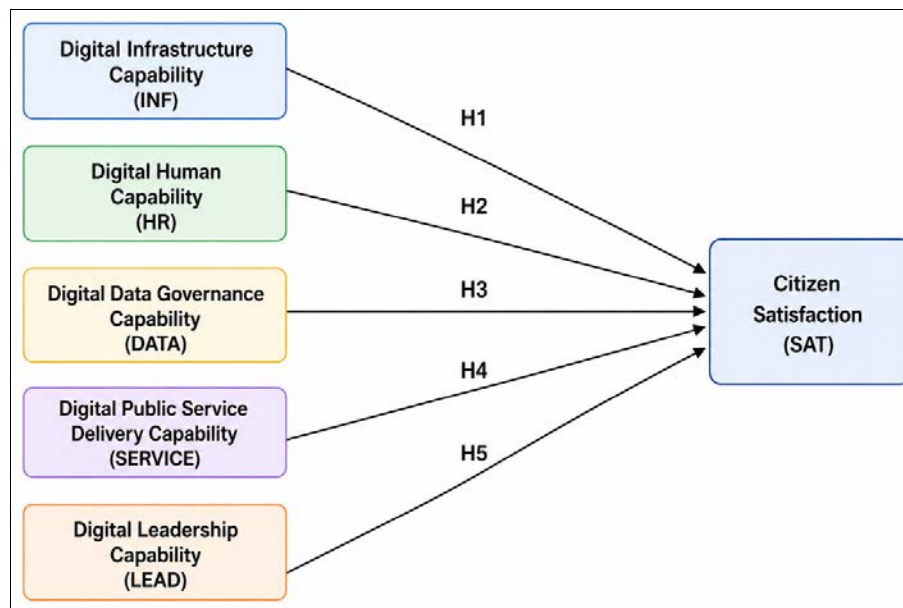


Fig 1: Proposed Research Model

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the impact of local government digital capability on citizen satisfaction in Vinh Long Province, Vietnam. A quantitative approach is appropriate because it enables the empirical examination of causal relationships among latent constructs using statistical modeling. Based on the proposed conceptual framework, the study investigates the effects of five dimensions of local government digital capability, digital infrastructure capability, digital human capability, digital data governance capability, digital public service delivery capability, and digital leadership capability, on citizen satisfaction.

The research was conducted in four stages. First, an extensive review of the literature on digital government, organizational digital capability, and citizen satisfaction was

undertaken to develop the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. Second, measurement scales were adapted from established studies and refined to fit the context of local government digital transformation in Vietnam. Third, survey data were collected from citizens who had used public administrative services in Vinh Long Province. Finally, the proposed model was empirically tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for complex research models with multiple latent variables, imposes minimal distributional assumptions, and is widely recommended for predictive and exploratory research in digital transformation and public administration (Hair et al., 2019, 2021).

The measurement instrument consisted of six latent constructs measured by 25 observed variables. Five

constructs represent local government digital capability, namely digital infrastructure capability (INF), digital human capability (HR), digital data governance capability (DATA), digital public service delivery capability (SERVICE), and digital leadership capability (LEAD). Citizen satisfaction (SAT) serves as the dependent construct. All measurement items were adapted from previous studies and assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

The target population comprised citizens aged 18 years or older who had used at least one public administrative service, either online or offline, in Vinh Long Province within the previous 12 months. To enhance the representativeness of the sample, respondents were selected from both urban and rural areas, including Vinh Long City, Long Ho District, Tam Binh District, Mang Thit District, and Vung Liem District. Convenience sampling combined with geographic stratification was employed. Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019), a minimum sample of approximately 250 observations is considered sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis. To improve statistical reliability and reduce sampling error, the study targeted between 400 and 500 valid responses.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 and SmartPLS 4.0. The analytical procedure consisted of two stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated by examining indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using outer loadings (>0.708), Cronbach's alpha (>0.70), Composite Reliability (>0.70), Average Variance Extracted

(AVE >0.50), and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT <0.85). Second, the structural model was assessed by estimating path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). The structural model is specified as follows:

$$SAT = \beta_1 INF + \beta_2 HR + \beta_3 DATA + \beta_4 SERVICE + \beta_5 LEAD + \varepsilon$$

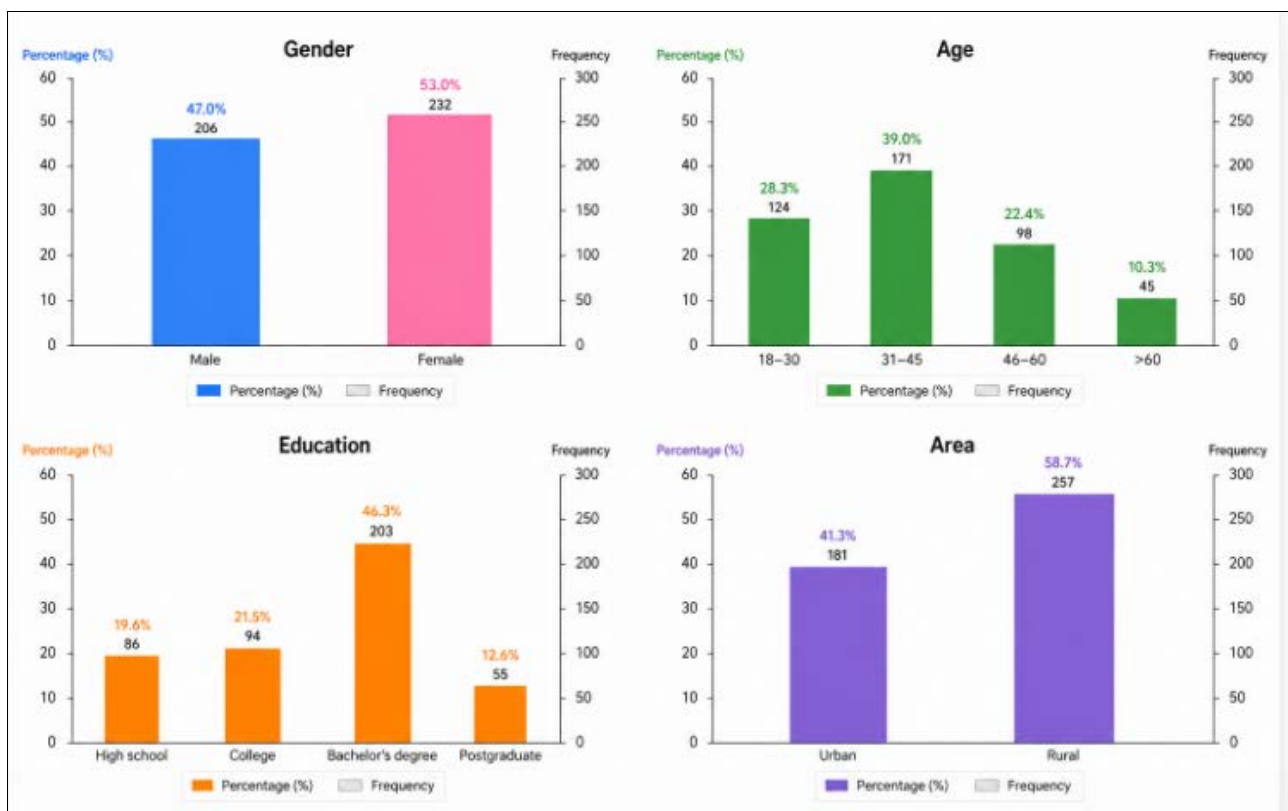
where SAT denotes citizen satisfaction; INF, HR, DATA, SERVICE, and LEAD represent the five dimensions of local government digital capability; β_1 – β_5 are the estimated path coefficients; and ε is the error term. A hypothesis is supported when the estimated path coefficient is positive and statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Overall, the adopted methodology provides a rigorous framework for evaluating the influence of local government digital capability on citizen satisfaction and offers reliable empirical evidence to support digital government development at the local level.

Results

1. Descriptive statistics of the sample

A total of 462 questionnaires were collected. After data cleaning and the removal of invalid responses (including incomplete questionnaires and responses exhibiting straight-lining patterns), 438 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, yielding a usable response rate of 94.81%.



Sources: obtained through author's research.

Chart 1: Sample Characteristics

The descriptive statistics indicate a relatively balanced gender distribution and adequate representation of both urban and rural populations in Vinh Long Province.

Respondents aged 31–45 years accounted for the largest proportion (39.0%), suggesting that this group is the most active in accessing public administrative services.

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Table 1: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio

Construct	INF	HR	DATA	SERVICE	LEAD	SAT
INF	-					
HR	0.621	-				
DATA	0.587	0.654	-			
SERVICE	0.674	0.711	0.695	-		
LEAD	0.542	0.608	0.647	0.701	-	
SAT	0.521	0.564	0.639	0.742	0.615	-

All HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.85, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity among the latent constructs.

2. Structural model assessment

After confirming the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples.

Multicollinearity assessment

Before testing the structural relationships, multicollinearity among predictor constructs was examined using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Table 2: Multicollinearity Assessment

Construct	VIF
INF	2.041
HR	2.218
DATA	2.346
SERVICE	2.587
LEAD	2.173

All VIF values are below 3.0, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in the structural model.

Explanatory power and predictive relevance

The coefficient of determination for the dependent variable

(SAT) is: $R^2 = 0.682$

This indicates that the five dimensions of local government digital capability explain 68.2% of the variance in citizen satisfaction. According to Hair et al. (2019), this represents relatively strong explanatory power for social science research.

In addition, the predictive relevance value is: $Q^2 = 0.473$. Since $Q^2 > 0$, the model demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance.

3. Hypothesis testing

The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 5.4.

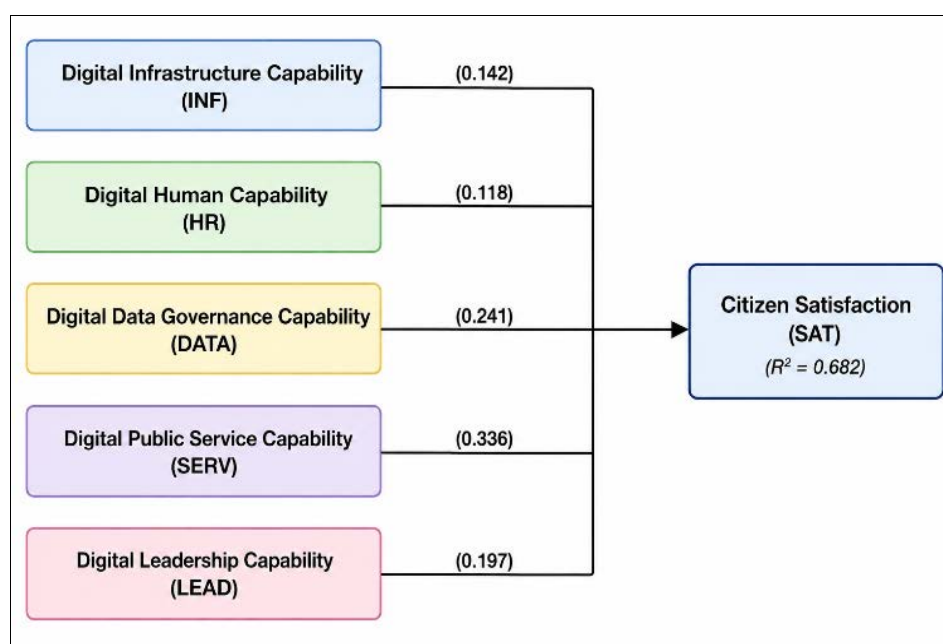
Table 3: Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	INF $\rightarrow$ SAT	0.142	3.214	0.001	Supported
H2	HR $\rightarrow$ SAT	0.118	2.876	0.004	Supported
H3	DATA $\rightarrow$ SAT	0.241	4.907	<0.001	Supported
H4	SERVICE $\rightarrow$ SAT	0.336	6.851	<0.001	Supported
H5	LEAD $\rightarrow$ SAT	0.197	4.115	<0.001	Supported

All five hypotheses are supported at the 5% significance level.

Among the five predictors:

- Digital public service delivery capability (SERVICE) has the strongest effect on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.336$).
- This is followed by digital data governance capability (DATA) ($\beta = 0.241$).
- Digital leadership capability (LEAD) ranks third ($\beta = 0.197$).
- Digital infrastructure capability (INF) and digital human capability (HR) exhibit smaller but still statistically significant effects.



Sources: obtained through author's research.

Fig 2: Structural model results

These findings suggest that, in the context of local government digital transformation in Vinh Long Province, factors directly associated with citizens' service experience particularly digital public service delivery capability play the most critical role in enhancing citizen satisfaction.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that local government digital capability has a positive and statistically significant impact on citizen satisfaction in Vinh Long Province. All five dimensions of digital capability, digital infrastructure capability, digital human capability, digital data governance capability, digital public service delivery capability, and digital leadership capability, significantly contribute to improving citizens' satisfaction with public administrative services. These findings support the central argument of Dynamic Capability Theory, which suggests that organizations operating in rapidly changing environments must continuously develop and reconfigure their capabilities to transform technological resources into organizational and public value (Teece et al., 1997). The model explains 68.2% of the variance in citizen satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.682$), indicating substantial explanatory power and highlighting that digital capability has become a structural determinant of public service quality rather than merely a supporting administrative tool.

Among the five dimensions, digital public service delivery capability exerts the strongest influence on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.336$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that citizens primarily evaluate digital government based on their actual experiences with public services rather than the underlying technological infrastructure. Online services that are accessible, user-friendly, transparent, and efficient significantly enhance citizens' perceptions of government performance. This result is consistent with the SERVQUAL framework proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which emphasizes perceived service quality as a key determinant of user satisfaction, and aligns with international evidence showing that mature digital governments achieve higher levels of citizen satisfaction through integrated and citizen-centered service delivery. Therefore, local governments should move beyond simply digitizing administrative processes and instead prioritize improving the overall user experience of digital public services.

The results also reveal that digital data governance capability has the second strongest effect on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$). Effective data management, interoperability among government agencies, and secure information sharing reduce administrative duplication, simplify procedures, and improve the efficiency of public service delivery. These findings reinforce the growing recognition that government data constitute a strategic public asset capable of supporting evidence-based decision-making and more responsive public services. As Vinh Long Province continues to expand sectoral databases and strengthen integration with national digital platforms, improving data governance is expected to further enhance administrative efficiency and reduce procedural burdens for citizens.

Digital leadership capability also demonstrates a significant positive effect on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.197$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that leadership plays a critical role in guiding digital transformation by establishing strategic direction, coordinating inter-agency collaboration,

allocating resources, and fostering organizational innovation. Effective digital leadership enables local governments to respond more rapidly to technological changes and overcome institutional barriers that often impede digital transformation. Consequently, leadership capability serves as an essential governance mechanism that aligns digital technologies, organizational resources, and administrative reform toward citizen-centered outcomes.

Although digital infrastructure capability positively influences citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.142$, $p < 0.05$), its effect is relatively modest compared with other dimensions. Reliable technological infrastructure, secure information systems, and stable digital platforms remain fundamental prerequisites for digital government implementation. However, as digital infrastructure has become increasingly standardized across many Vietnamese localities, it appears to function more as an enabling condition than as a major source of competitive advantage in public service delivery. Similarly, digital human capability exhibits the smallest, yet still significant, positive effect on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.118$, $p < 0.05$). One possible explanation is that the expansion of online public services has reduced citizens' dependence on direct interactions with public officials, shifting the role of civil servants from service providers to facilitators of digital processes. Nevertheless, disparities in digital competencies among public officials remain evident, indicating that continuous investment in digital skills development remains essential for sustaining long-term digital transformation.

The findings make several important theoretical contributions. First, this study extends the digital government literature by conceptualizing local government digital capability as a multidimensional organizational construct encompassing digital infrastructure, digital human capability, digital data governance, digital public service delivery, and digital leadership, rather than focusing solely on technological adoption. Second, it provides empirical evidence from a provincial government in Vietnam, thereby enriching the limited literature on digital governance in emerging economies and local government contexts. Third, the results demonstrate that digital public service delivery capability, rather than digital infrastructure or human capability, is the strongest predictor of citizen satisfaction. This finding reinforces the importance of citizen-centered governance and suggests that investments in digital transformation should prioritize improving service experiences alongside technological modernization. Overall, the study confirms that digital transformation generates meaningful public value only when local governments successfully translate their digital capabilities into efficient, accessible, transparent, and user-oriented public services that enhance citizens' satisfaction.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study indicate that local government digital capability is a critical determinant of citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in Vinh Long Province. Among the five dimensions examined, digital public service delivery capability, digital data governance capability, and digital leadership capability exert the strongest influence on citizen satisfaction. These results suggest that improving governance effectiveness in the digital era requires more than technological investment alone. Successful digital transformation depends on

comprehensive institutional reform that integrates digital technologies with organizational capability, human resource development, data governance, and citizen-centered service delivery. Accordingly, several policy implications can be derived from the empirical findings.

First, local governments should prioritize the redesign of public service delivery toward a citizen-centered governance model. As digital public service delivery capability is the strongest predictor of citizen satisfaction, improving citizens' actual service experience should become the primary objective of digital transformation. Rather than focusing solely on increasing the number of online public services, local governments should simplify administrative procedures, eliminate unnecessary processing steps, improve service accessibility, and develop user-friendly digital platforms that are inclusive of older adults, citizens with limited digital literacy, and residents in rural areas. Enhancing convenience, transparency, and responsiveness throughout the service process will contribute directly to higher levels of citizen satisfaction.

Second, strengthening digital data governance should become a strategic priority for local government modernization. The strong influence of digital data governance capability demonstrates that integrated and interoperable data systems play an essential role in improving administrative efficiency and service quality. Vinh Long Province should therefore accelerate the development of an integrated digital data ecosystem by promoting data sharing among government agencies, standardizing data management practices, and strengthening interoperability across administrative levels. Priority should be given to integrating high-impact databases such as population, land administration, healthcare, education, and social welfare. Effective data governance can significantly reduce repetitive documentation, simplify administrative procedures, and improve evidence-based decision-making, thereby enhancing both government efficiency and citizens' service experiences.

Third, the significant role of digital leadership highlights the importance of leadership commitment in driving successful digital transformation. Digital leaders should not only formulate strategic visions but also mobilize organizational resources, coordinate cross-sector collaboration, encourage innovation, and lead institutional change. To strengthen digital leadership, Vinh Long Province should invest in leadership development programs focusing on digital governance, strategic management, data-driven decision-making, and organizational innovation. In addition, digital transformation outcomes should be incorporated into the performance evaluation systems of public managers to enhance accountability and strengthen commitment to administrative reform.

Although digital infrastructure capability and digital human capability exhibit relatively smaller effects than other dimensions, they remain fundamental prerequisites for sustainable digital government development. Local governments should continue investing in reliable digital infrastructure, including high-speed communication networks, cloud computing platforms, secure data centers, and cybersecurity systems to ensure the stable operation of digital public services. At the same time, continuous capacity-building programs should be implemented to enhance the digital competencies of public officials. Training should extend beyond basic information

technology skills to include data analytics, artificial intelligence applications, digital problem-solving, and technological adaptability. Reducing disparities in digital capability among public employees will improve organizational coordination and support more effective implementation of digital transformation initiatives.

More broadly, the findings suggest that digital transformation should ultimately support the transition from a traditional administrative model toward a service-oriented government. Digital technologies should be viewed not as an end in themselves but as instruments for creating greater public value through transparent, efficient, and citizen-centered governance. Local governments should therefore establish effective mechanisms for citizen participation and continuous feedback, allowing citizens to evaluate service quality, report operational challenges, and contribute suggestions for service improvement. Such participatory governance practices can strengthen public trust, improve accountability, and support continuous innovation in public administration.

Overall, the study suggests that sustainable digital government development requires a balanced combination of technological investment, institutional reform, leadership commitment, digital talent development, and citizen-centered service innovation. Only when local governments successfully integrate these capabilities into coherent governance practices can digital transformation generate meaningful public value and substantially enhance citizen satisfaction with public administrative services.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of local government digital capability on citizen satisfaction in Vinh Long Province, Vietnam, within the context of digital transformation. Drawing on Dynamic Capability Theory, the SERVQUAL model, and Public Value Theory, the study proposed and empirically tested a research framework comprising five dimensions of local government digital capability: digital infrastructure capability, digital human capability, digital data governance capability, digital public service delivery capability, and digital leadership capability.

The findings reveal that all five dimensions have positive and statistically significant effects on citizen satisfaction. Among them, digital public service delivery capability has the strongest influence, followed by digital data governance capability and digital leadership capability. These results indicate that citizen satisfaction depends not only on technological investment but also on the ability of local governments to deliver efficient, accessible, and citizen-centered digital public services.

The study contributes to the digital government literature by conceptualizing local government digital capability as a multidimensional construct and providing empirical evidence from a provincial context in Vietnam. From a practical perspective, the findings offer policy implications for strengthening digital capability through improved public service delivery, integrated data governance, effective digital leadership, and continuous development of digital human resources.

This study has several limitations. The analysis is limited to Vinh Long Province and is based on cross-sectional data, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. In addition, only the direct effects of digital capability were examined. Future studies are encouraged to investigate

multiple localities, employ longitudinal data, and incorporate mediating or moderating variables, such as trust in government, perceived service quality, or citizens' digital readiness, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital government performance and citizen satisfaction.

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