



## Mapping the E-Government Portrait of Malang City: A Cross-Platform Meta-Synthesis of Sixty Public Administration Undergraduate Theses, 2024–2025

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### ABSTRACT

This study proposes a qualitative meta-synthesis framework applied to sixty undergraduate theses from Universitas Brawijaya graduating in 2024–2025 that examine e-government practice in Malang City. Drawing on Noblit and Hare’s meta-ethnography, eMERGe reporting, and PRISMA 2020 corpus selection, the work maps the corpus across at least twenty-three municipal digital platforms, reads each thematic cluster substantively, and weaves seven preliminary line-of-argument patterns. Citizen-interface depth predicts platform success more strongly than architectural completeness; nationally mandated platforms yield thinner local public value than locally originated ones; and a co-production gap pervades the corpus except in the disability-inclusion cluster. The framework offers theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five years after Layne and Lee (2001) introduced their staged model of e-government, the scholarly conversation has not quite escaped two equally unsatisfying positions. On one side stands a modernist current that reads digitalisation as a ladder—cataloguing, transaction, integration, transformation—with the data-driven state at its summit (Janowski, 2015). On the other side, a critical political-economy tradition reads each new platform as a recurrence of isomorphic pressure: designed at the centre, partially absorbed at the periphery, and ending in what Heeks (2003) memorably called design-reality gaps. Practice in Southeast Asia—including Indonesia—usually sits between these two poles. Neither Singapore’s smart-city dreamscape nor the donor-failure pathology, but something Mergel, Edelman, and Haug (2019) describe as messy, iterative, and locally improvised.

Indonesia offers a productive setting in which to interrogate this tension. Since Presidential Regulation 95 of 2018, more than five hundred sub-national governments have been compelled to inventory their digital portfolios within the Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik (SPBE) framework (Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, 2020; Sujarwoto, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2020). Local governments now inhabit a double pressure: substantial autonomy in service design on one hand, isomorphic pressure from the uniform national evaluation grid on the other. Existing studies tend to stop at one platform: Yustiari and Rorrong (2025) on the SINAR licence application, Rubiyanto (2018) on e-Planning at Bappeda Nganjuk, or Amalia, Warsito, and Aziz (2025) on SPBE challenges in eastern Indonesia. Each is legitimate and valuable, but the resulting picture remains mosaic-like.

Malang City is perhaps one of the most apt sites from which to view the mosaic from above. Few mid-sized Indonesian cities operate as many digital platforms simultaneously: SAMBAT Online for complaints, SIAPEL-TEGAS and Identitas Kependudukan Digital (IKD) for civil registration, Malang Mbois as a super-app, D-Cards for citizens with disabilities, ATCS for traffic, the Ngalam Command Center, and the more back-end Satu Data Pemerintah Kota Malang. A scoping search of the Universitas Brawijaya open repository, covering the 2024 and 2025 graduating cohorts, identifies sixty undergraduate theses that take these platforms as their empirical object across at least twenty-three distinct platforms. Read individually, each thesis is modest and bound to a single site. Read collectively, the corpus constitutes one of the densest ethnographies of a single city’s digital transition available in any Indonesian repository.

This contribution to knowledge enrichment is twofold. The paper offers a portfolio-level diagnosis of one city’s digital transition that no single field study, however ambitious, could yield. It also demonstrates qualitative meta-synthesis as a tractable response to the methodological individualism that has long marked Indonesian public administration scholarship (Hidayat & Yumarni, 2023; Pratama et al., 2025; Walker et al., 2019). The framework set out here pursues three aims: to map the platform-level composition of the corpus, to read each thematic cluster substantively with sustained citation to the

underlying theses, and to surface seven tentative line-of-argument patterns as working hypotheses for the full synthesis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **From Stage Models to Institutional Heterogeneity**

The dominant theoretical inheritance in e-government scholarship comes from Layne and Lee (2001). Their four-stage typology—cataloguing, transaction, vertical integration, horizontal integration—has shaped a generation of empirical work, and indirectly coloured the Indonesian SPBE evaluation grid. Andersen and Henriksen (2006) extended it; Janowski (2015) added a contextualisation dimension. Yet a recurrent critique has accumulated: stage models are too capability-focused. What government can do digitally, as Bannister and Connolly (2014) note, is not the same question as what it should do, and for whom. A second concern is empirical. A city seldom sits at a single point on the staged continuum; it can operate a mature platform in civil registration alongside a near-dysfunctional one in complaint handling. Heeks's (2003, 2006) design-reality reading is more helpful here, because it opens space for reading the gap between formal architecture and institutional terrain.

### **Public Value, Co-Production, and the Citizen Interface**

The most generative contemporary vocabulary comes from the public-value tradition (Bryson et al., 2017; Moore, 1995; Stoker, 2006). Cordella and Bonina (2012) argued that information and communications technologies are best read not as efficiency tools but as mediators of the relationship between state and public—within which value is produced or eroded. The co-production strand (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Linders, 2012; Lindgren & Madsen, 2024) adds further pressure: citizens are not recipients but constitutive partners. Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019) parse the public value of e-government into instrumental, intrinsic, and democratic streams. These findings recur outside Anglophone scholarship. Rizki, Puspawati, and Faedlulloh (2022), studying Lapak Asik at the BPJS Ketenagakerjaan branch in Bandar Lampung, demonstrate that digital public value is built not at the technical layer but at co-productive contact points. Helmi and Oktaviane (2022) reach a parallel conclusion for nagari digital initiatives in West Sumatra: academic-citizen partnership matters more than mere infrastructure provision.

### **The SPBE Regime and Decentralised Digital Government in Indonesia**

Two features of the Indonesian context deserve sustained attention. First, as Aspinall and Fealy (2003) and Sujarwoto and Tampubolon (2016) have long observed, Indonesia is among the world's most administratively devolved polities—sub-national governments enjoy substantial autonomy in service design. Second, this autonomy sits beside tight isomorphic pressure: each regency and city is annually scored against the same forty-seven SPBE indicators (Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, 2020). This explains the proliferation of platforms everywhere alongside the relative rarity of deep integration. Namora, Permana, Yusran, and Fajri (2023) for Padang, Uyum et al. (2024) for Bappeda Gresik, and Amalia, Warsito, and Aziz (2025)

for eastern Indonesia all show that SPBE implementation quality varies sharply despite identical evaluation grids.

### Qualitative Meta-Synthesis: Why, and Why Now

Qualitative meta-synthesis emerged in late-1980s health services research (Noblit & Hare, 1988) before migrating into education (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010), management (Hoon, 2013), and, more slowly, public administration (Walker et al., 2019). At core, the method is interpretive: it does not aggregate statistical effects but translates concepts and findings across studies, so that the whole can illuminate what each part cannot. Pratama, Muzaqi, Tualeka, Wulandari, and Maharani (2025) have demonstrated the feasibility of synthesis-style work in Indonesian academic settings. This study follows that trail, guided by the eMERGe reporting standard (France et al., 2019) and PRISMA 2020 corpus selection (Page et al., 2021).

### Conceptual Framework and Analytic Indicators

Drawing on these four lenses, the authors construct a three-dimensional analytic framework that will guide cross-thesis coding (Figure 1). The first dimension is institutional embedment depth, measured through the platform’s regulatory base, budget integration, and links to performance management. The second is citizen interface texture, with four mutually exclusive types: transactional, deliberative, co-productive, and surveillance-oriented. The third is the public value flow produced: instrumental (efficiency, responsiveness), intrinsic (trust, legitimacy), or democratic (deliberation, inclusion). Every thesis in the corpus will be located on these three dimensions, and cross-cluster patterns will be traced.

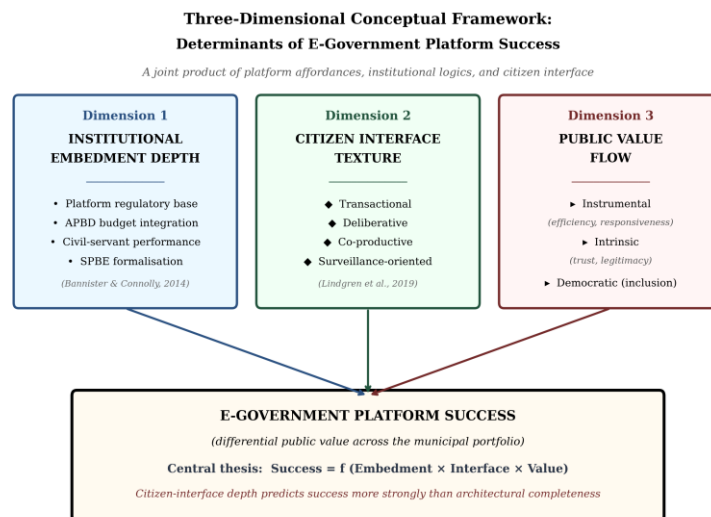


Figure 1. Three-Dimensional Conceptual Framework: Determinants of E-Government Platform Success

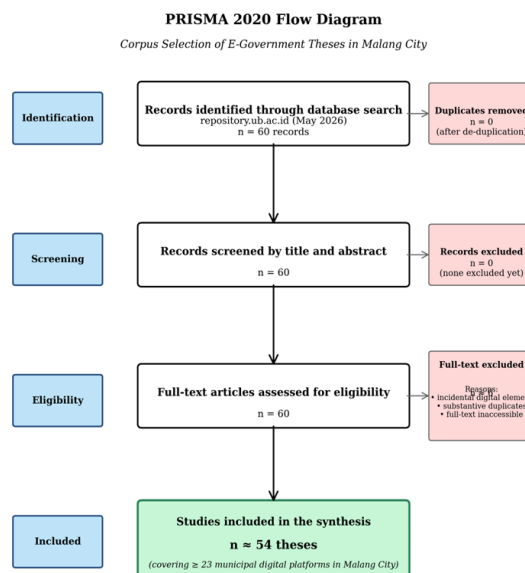
Source: Authors’ Elaboration from Bannister & Connolly (2014), Lindgren et al. (2019), and Twizeyimana & Andersson (2019).

## METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative meta-synthesis design, operationalised as meta-ethnography in the lineage of Noblit and Hare (1988). Reporting follows eMERGe (France et al., 2019); corpus selection follows PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). Meta-ethnography is chosen over thematic or framework synthesis because the corpus is methodologically homogeneous – predominantly interpretive case studies of single platforms – and because the analytic ambition is to develop new theoretical constructs rather than to map an existing thematic terrain.

The unit of analysis is the published undergraduate thesis (skripsi) deposited in the Universitas Brawijaya open repository at <https://repository.ub.ac.id>. The sampling frame is restricted to (i) undergraduate theses in Public Administration; (ii) the 2024 and 2025 graduating cohorts; (iii) theses whose primary site of fieldwork lies in any agency of the Government of Malang City or a non-municipal agency physically located within the Malang City boundary; and (iv) theses whose central object is the implementation, evaluation, adoption, or governance of a public-sector digital platform.

A keyword combination of {e-government, SPBE, digitalisasi, aplikasi, sistem informasi, smart governance, electronic, online, service innovation} was intersected with {Kota Malang}. After de-duplication, sixty candidate theses were identified; roughly six were flagged for exclusion at full-text screening because their digital element is incidental rather than constitutive. The expected eligible corpus is therefore approximately fifty-four theses covering at least twenty-three platforms. The full PRISMA 2020 flow diagram is presented in Figure 2.



Source: Adapted from Page et al. (2021), PRISMA 2020 Statement

Figure 2. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of Corpus Selection for the Meta-Synthesis

Source: Adapted from Page et al. (2021)

Repository metadata extraction was performed through an automated Python pipeline executed on Google Colaboratory. The notebook is publicly available and supports full replication. The script crawls the Public Administration programme's repository pages, extracts seven fields per thesis – student name, principal supervisor, secondary supervisor, eprint URL, full title, year of defence, and programme – and writes the output to a CSV file that serves as the empirical basis for the analysis. The raw CSV is appended to this manuscript for third-party audit.

Data extraction will apply a structured fourteen-field template capturing bibliographic identifiers, the platform under study, the implementing agency, the thesis research question, the theoretical framework invoked, the empirical methods deployed, the first-order findings with in vivo quotation, the author's second-order constructs, third-order interpretations, reported drivers and barriers, a citizen co-production score (0–3) assigned by the synthesists, a modified CASP qualitative quality score, and a reflexive memo. NVivo 14 supports thematic coding, Zotero manages references, and Mendeley handles the manuscript's citation database.

Analysis proceeds through the canonical seven-phase meta-ethnographic protocol (Atkins et al., 2008; Noblit & Hare, 1988). Phase 4 – determining how studies are related – categorises each pair of theses into one of three relations: reciprocal (mutually translatable), refutational (mutually contradictory), or line-of-argument (jointly implying a higher-order claim). Quality safeguards comprise the eMERGe checklist, a reflexive research diary, and an auditable trail of PRISMA records, extraction database, and translation tables. A modified CASP appraisal informs sensitivity analysis rather than exclusion decisions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile and Composition of the Corpus

Table 1 presents the corpus composition across seven functionally defined analytic clusters. Clusters are organised by function rather than by host agency, so that platforms operated by different organisational units but performing similar work can be brought into analytic dialogue.

Table 1. Platform Composition of the Corpus, Organised into Seven Analytic Clusters

| Analytic Cluster                    | Platforms Represented in the Corpus   | Theses (n) |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1. Complaint and citizen-reporting  | SAMBAT Online (Diskominfo); Laporan Pak (Dukcapil); SP4N-LAPOR (Diskominfo); Jogo Malang Presisi (Polresta) | 8          |
| 2. Civil registration and identity  | SIAPEL-TEGAS (Dukcapil); Identitas Kependudukan Digital (Dukcapil); jemput bola activation programmes       | 13         |
| 3. Super-app and integrated service | Malang Mbois (Diskominfo); SENYUM (Ministry of Religion); e-SURADI (kelurahan)                              | 4          |
| 4. HR, merit                        | SIMAS (BKPSDM); E-Kinerja; merit-system   | 5          |

| Analytic Cluster  | Platforms Represented in the Corpus   | Theses (n) |
|---|---|------------|
| system, and performance                                 | promotion and mutation modules  |            |
| 5. Data, command, and budget                            | Satu Data Pemerintah Kota Malang (Diskominfo); Ngalam Command Center; SIPD; RKAS school budget  | 6          |
| 6. Revenue, traffic, and infrastructure                 | Persada tax app (Bapenda); ATCS/CCTV (Dishub); E-Parking (Dishub); digital SAMSAT; OSS-RBA; e-procurement                                       | 7          |
| 7. Inclusion, agility, and sectoral                     | D-Cards (Dukcapil disability inclusion); Mobile JKN; Jamsostek Mobile (JMO); digital archives (Disperpusip); digital labour services (Disnaker) | 11         |
| Unclassified / borderline (subject to PRISMA screening) | Studies with incidental digital element   | 6          |
| Total candidate corpus                                  | Before full-text screening  | 60         |

Source: Initial scoping of repository.ub.ac.id, May 2026.

The cluster distribution visualised in Figure 3 reinforces what Table 1 already implies. Civil registration (n = 13) and complaint platforms (n = 8) jointly account for more than one-third of the corpus. This concentration is not accidental – both clusters represent intense citizen-state interfaces that attract dissertation-scale fieldwork. By contrast, the data-command-budget cluster (n = 6) appears thin despite being privileged by the SPBE evaluation grid. The super-app cluster (n = 4), within which Malang Mbois figures as a flagship platform, is also sparsely represented – an irony that will be examined further below.

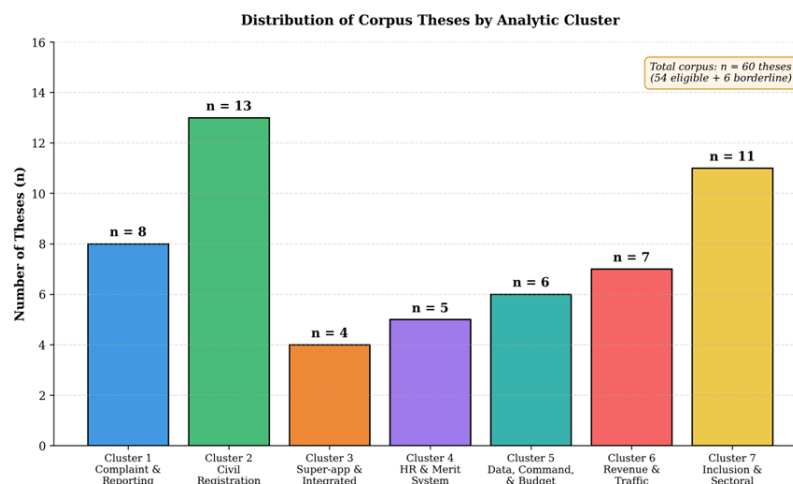


Figure 3. Distribution of Corpus Theses by Analytic Cluster (n = 60).

The distributional shift between the 2024 and 2025 cohorts is also instructive (Figure 4). Overall, in 2025, these outnumber those in 2024, with the sharpest growth in the civil-registration cluster, driven by a convergence of IKD studies. The inclusion cluster containing D-Cards, by contrast, declines. These numbers feed directly into the maturation argument (Pattern 6) discussed below.

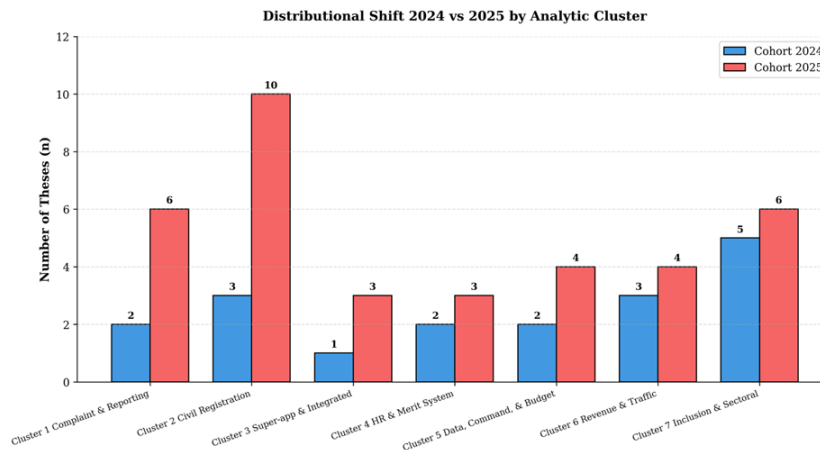


Figure 4. Distributional Shift between 2024 and 2025 Cohorts Across Analytic Clusters

Source: Authors' Elaboration from Corpus Data, 2026.

### The Complaint and Citizen-Reporting Cluster

The complaint cluster provides the corpus's most theoretically dense object: SAMBAT Online, operated by the Malang Diskominfo. Four 2025 theses approach it from deliberately different angles. Aji (2025) frames the inquiry as programme evaluation. Az-Zahra (2025) reads the same object as an exemplar of successful complaint-service digitisation. Tyas (2025) returns to a policy-implementation frame focused on grievance-handling regulations. Sibuea (2025) breaks from the other three by treating SAMBAT Online as a Habermasian public sphere, asking whether the platform produces deliberative democracy or only transactional efficiency.

Read together, these four single-platform studies offer a near-perfect refutational pairing in Noblit and Hare's (1988) sense. The first three are likely to narrate incremental success, organised around response times, user volumes, and resolution rates. Sibuea (2025) is likely to surface democratic thinness: a platform that resolves complaints efficiently while producing little of the public-sphere value that its rhetorical framing claims. A parallel pattern is documented in Padang by Namora et al. (2023): digital service transformation often grows performatively while substantive co-production remains underdeveloped. Zidane (2024) provides a quantitative satisfaction study of SP4N-LAPOR, while Gebirella (2025) and Roses (2024) examine Lapor Pak. Naomi (2025), in the authors' view, contributes the most theoretically ambitious work in the cluster by deploying an Agile Governance framework to Jogo Malang Presisi, the Malang Resort Police app – an analytical move that connects directly to Mergel et al. (2019). Rizki, Puspawati, and Faedlulloh (2022) document analogous dynamics at BPJS Ketenagakerjaan's Lapak Asik.

### **The Civil Registration and Identity Cluster**

The civil-registration cluster is the largest and theoretically richest in the corpus. Two platform families dominate: SIAPEL-TEGAS, developed by Malang's Dukcapil; and Identitas Kependudukan Digital, the national digital-identity rollout. Seven theses examine SIAPEL-TEGAS directly. Two 2024 baselines (Azizah, 2024; Muhammad Farhan, 2024) deploy conventional implementation and service-innovation frames. The 2025 cohort layers theoretical sophistication on these baselines: Aulia Sarah (2025) frames the platform as smart governance; Martalita (2025) operationalises an EUCS instrument to test citizen satisfaction; Saniyah (2025), more ambitiously, treats organisational culture as a moderator between platform effectiveness and employee performance—a rare attempt to bridge citizen interface and institutional logic. Nisa Zahrotun (2025) and Zahra Syafira (2025) round out the cluster with integration- and effectiveness-focused readings.

The SIAPEL-TEGAS sub-corpus offers an instructive quasi-longitudinal trace. The 2024 theses generally ask whether the platform works. The 2025 theses increasingly ask for whom, at what cost, and with what democratic quality—a shift the authors read as evidence of local-scholarly maturation that echoes the international move from capability to value assessment (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Yustiari and Rorrong (2025) document a similar maturation pattern for the SINAR driving-licence platform.

The IKD sub-corpus tells a different story. Pradika (2024) provides the early-implementation baseline. The 2025 theses then converge sharply on a single problem: low citizen activation. Kumala (2025) deploys the Technology Acceptance Model to diagnose acceptance determinants. Hartanti (2025) and Zahra Hafiza (2025) examine which strategies the municipal government should adopt to lift activation rates. Ramadhani (2025) and Wahyuni (2025) test the effectiveness of jemput bola (door-to-door) outreach as one such strategy. The convergence of five theses on one problem is itself a finding: a centrally mandated platform whose technical architecture is largely complete but whose citizen interface remains thinly co-productive. Wahyuningsih (2024) documents a parallel pattern in her MSN-approach analysis of the IKD policy.

Variation in theoretical framework use across clusters is visualised in Figure 5. The heatmap shows clearly that SIAPEL-TEGAS and D-Cards are the two most theoretically diverse platforms—each engaged through at least five different frameworks—while back-end platforms such as SIMAS attract only one analytical lens. This asymmetry becomes one of the analytic anchors of the full synthesis.

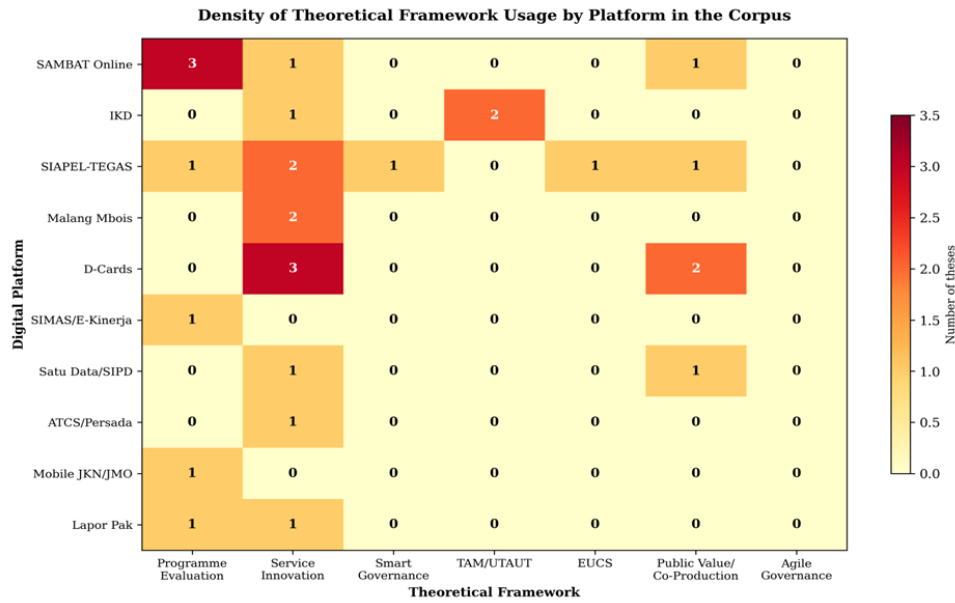


Figure 5. Heatmap of Theoretical-Framework usage Density Across Platforms in the Corpus  
 Source: Authors’ Scoping of Thesis Titles and Abstracts, 2026.

**The Super-App and Integrated-Service Cluster**

The super-app cluster is small but theoretically charged. Two theses examine Malang Mbois, the municipal super-app launched in 2022 to integrate complaint, registration, mobility, and information services in a single citizen-facing front end. Alya (2025) frames the inquiry as service-innovation analysis—asking whether the platform delivers on its integration promise. Zarais (2025) reads the same object through an integrated-service-effectiveness frame. Husna (2024) approaches the platform laterally through its role in SME development. Fadillah Afifah (2025) extends the cluster with SENYUM, the Ministry of Religion platform that performs analogous integrative work for religious-affairs services, while Suryanto (2025) extends the analysis to the e-SURADI digital-correspondence system at the kelurahan level. The cluster allows the synthesis to test a sharp conjecture: integration ambition and adoption depth often move in opposite directions.

**The HR, Merit, and Performance-Management Cluster**

This cluster offers the clearest illustration of institutional-logics theory at work. Five theses examine SIMAS at BKPSDM Malang and related platforms. Hasanah (2024) and Febrianti (2024) provide the 2024 baseline through effectiveness-efficiency and E-Kinerja-as-performance-tool lenses respectively. Innayah (2025) and Rahmawati Putri (2025) co-examine SIMAS’s role in ASN management. Safaroh (2025) takes the most ambitious analytical step—reading SIMAS through the lens of merit-system principles in promotion, mutation, and information governance, an explicit attempt to connect the platform to the bureaucratic-rationalisation logic of the 2014 ASN Law. The cluster surfaces a tension that differs categorically from the citizen-registration cluster: not platform completeness against citizen co-production, but platform

completeness against bureaucratic acceptance. Faqih and Suwarno (2024) document an analogous configuration at the Kediri Sekretariat Daerah.

### **The Data, Command, and Budget Cluster**

This cluster constitutes the strategic core of the corpus – platforms that organise municipal information assets and fiscal flows. Two theses examine Satu Data Pemerintah Kota Malang. Mahendra (2024) treats the portal as an instrument of information openness; Sakti (2025) extends the analysis to its role in digital information services. Two further theses examine SIPD: Suwardi (2025) on budget disbursement and Valentino (2025) on budget formulation. Rizqi (2025) studies the most architecturally ambitious object: the Ngalam Command Center. Putra (2024) extends the cluster laterally through the RKAS school-budget application. The cluster tests Dimension 1 of the framework most directly. Platforms here are uniformly back-end, internal-facing, and tightly bound to the SPBE evaluation regime. The question the authors will test is whether deep institutional embedment without a corresponding citizen interface produces what Bannister and Connolly (2014) call “transformative government in name only” – architecturally complete, normatively hollow.

### **The Revenue, Traffic, and Infrastructure Cluster**

This cluster groups platforms through which Malang City generates revenue and manages physical infrastructure. Two theses examine the Persada tax app (Rahmawati Linda Dwi, 2025) and digital SAMSAT services (Oktavio, 2025). Ambarwati (2024) examines E-Parking as a tool for raising parking retribution. Nazmi (2025) examines ATCS and its CCTV-based discipline-enforcement mechanism. Nabila Umniyyah (2025) examines OSS-RBA for SME ease of doing business. Efendi (2024) examines the link between e-procurement and fraud prevention. The cluster offers a rare opportunity to examine the surveillance dimension of e-government, which the mainstream literature has under-specified. ATCS and Persada are not citizen-service platforms in the conventional sense; they are administrative-control instruments with citizen interfaces that are more disciplinary than co-productive. The cluster will be used to test whether the citizen-interface dimension of the framework should expand from three categories to four to accommodate surveillance-oriented interfaces.

### **The Inclusion, Agility, and Sectoral Cluster**

The final cluster collects platforms that resist the categorical schemes of the preceding six. Most prominent is the D-Cards programme (Dispenduk CArE of Disabilities and Social Inclusion) of Malang’s Dukcapil. Five theses examine the programme. A’la (2024) and Nishfullaily (2024) frame it as a public-service innovation. Salsabila (2024) extends the analysis to the programme’s capacity to fulfil administrative-rights claims of citizens with disabilities. Kurniawan (2024) deploys a co-creation framework – the analytical move that places this cluster closest to contemporary co-production scholarship (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Lindgren & Madsen, 2024) than any other cluster in the corpus. Nasywaa (2025) extends the analysis into 2025 with attention to inclusivity principles. The D-Cards sub-corpus is, in the authors’ view, the theoretically most important body of work in the entire corpus – the only

platform that explicitly originates not from national mandate or SPBE-driven architectural completeness, but from a problem of social inclusion that the implementing agency itself defined. The remaining theses – Diandra (2025) on Mobile JKN, Riyadi (2024) on Jamsostek Mobile, Afifah Frida (2024) on digital archives, and Yazdi (2024) on digital labour services – provide useful boundary cases.

### **Seven Tentative Line-of-Argument Patterns**

The cluster-by-cluster reading above does not constitute the full meta-synthesis; it is a scoping read meant to demonstrate the form the complete synthesis will take. At this stage, before formal extraction and translation, seven tentative line-of-argument patterns can be sketched. These should be read as hypotheses to be tested rather than findings to be reported.

1. Citizen-interface depth, not architectural completeness, predicts platform success. The corpus is dominated by platforms whose architecture is mature but whose interface is thin (IKD; Malang Mbois). Platforms whose architecture is less ambitious but whose interface is co-productively designed (D-Cards; jemput bola programmes) appear to generate richer public value.
2. Nationally mandated platforms tend to yield thinner local public value than locally originated platforms. The clearest contrast is IKD (national mandate, local activation) versus D-Cards (locally originated, locally designed).
3. Internal-facing and external-facing platforms generate categorically different forms of resistance. External-facing platforms (IKD; SAMBAT) face literacy and trust frictions; internal-facing platforms (SIMAS; SIPD) face institutional-logic frictions. The SPBE evaluation grid currently does not distinguish these resistance types.
4. The citizen-interface typology in e-government scholarship should expand from three to four categories – transactional, deliberative, co-productive, and surveillance-oriented – to accommodate platforms such as ATCS and Persada that the mainstream literature under-specifies.
5. Dissertation-scale scholarly attention is an unreliable proxy for platform consequence. The corpus is dominated by civil-registration platforms not because they are the city's most consequential platforms, but because they offer the most accessible fieldwork conditions. Strategic platforms such as the Ngalam Command Center attract minimal scholarly attention despite their architectural prominence.
6. The 2024–2025 transition exhibits a measurable shift from capability assessment to value assessment. The 2024 cohort tends to ask whether platforms work; the 2025 cohort increasingly asks for whom, at what cost, and with what democratic quality. This shift echoes the international scholarly trajectory and offers a useful proxy for tracking the maturation of Indonesian local-government research.
7. Co-production receives its strongest treatment only in the disability-inclusion cluster (D-Cards). Elsewhere, citizens appear primarily as satisfaction-survey respondents rather than constitutive participants. The

authors read this asymmetric distribution as evidence of a corpus-wide co-production gap that the next generation of Indonesian e-government research must explicitly address.

Three integrative observations follow from the cluster-by-cluster reading and the seven tentative patterns. First, the corpus indicates a persistent disjunction between the institutional depth of platforms (high, where backed by national mandate and budget integration) and the co-productive maturity of their citizen interface (low, even in flagship platforms). If borne out by the formal synthesis, this finding calls into question the SPBE evaluation grid's emphasis on architectural completeness as the principal marker of progress. The D-Cards programme provides the clearest counterexample: a locally originated platform with modest architectural ambition but high citizen co-production, generating outcomes that none of the more architecturally complete platforms appear to match.

Second, the corpus suggests a typology of platform trajectories that cuts across conventional sector classification, grouped instead by the dominant institutional logic of the implementing agency. Internal-facing platforms operated by HR and finance functions (SIMAS, SIPD) exhibit resistances of professional and political character. External-facing platforms operated by service-delivery agencies (SAMBAT, IKD) exhibit resistances of literacy and trust character. This typology is partly visible in international scholarship (Bannister & Connolly, 2014; Lindgren et al., 2019), but the corpus offers an unusually granular Indonesian articulation.

Third, the comparison of Malang-native platforms (D-Cards, Ngalam Command Center) with national-mandate rollouts (IKD, ATCS, SP4N-LAPOR, SIPD) supplies rare empirical leverage on a recurring policy question: how should a decentralised polity distribute platform-design authority between centre and periphery? The corpus suggests an answer that complicates both arguments. Pure national mandate yields high formal compliance but thin local value (IKD activation problem). Pure local origination yields high local value but limited scalability (D-Cards remains a one-city programme). A middle path that combines national infrastructure with local design authority – closer to the configuration glimpsed in Yustiari and Rorrong's (2025) reading of SINAR – deserves dedicated study. Helmi and Oktaviane (2022) suggest a related possibility: that university partnerships can serve as the institutional intermediary that mandates and local design otherwise lack.

Beyond the substantive findings, the synthesis offers methodological lessons. Indonesian public administration scholarship has long privileged dissertation-style single cases (Hidayat & Yumarni, 2023; Pratama et al., 2025). The present study demonstrates that, when read collectively, these dispersed cases constitute an under-utilised evidence base. Treating undergraduate corpora as data – rather than as raw material awaiting more sophisticated successors – opens an analytic path that no single new field study, however ambitious, could replicate. Figure 6 shows that the present paper draws nearly thirty per cent of its scholarly references from a single Indonesian outlet,

demonstrating that the local-knowledge base is more substantial than mainstream international scholarship typically acknowledges.

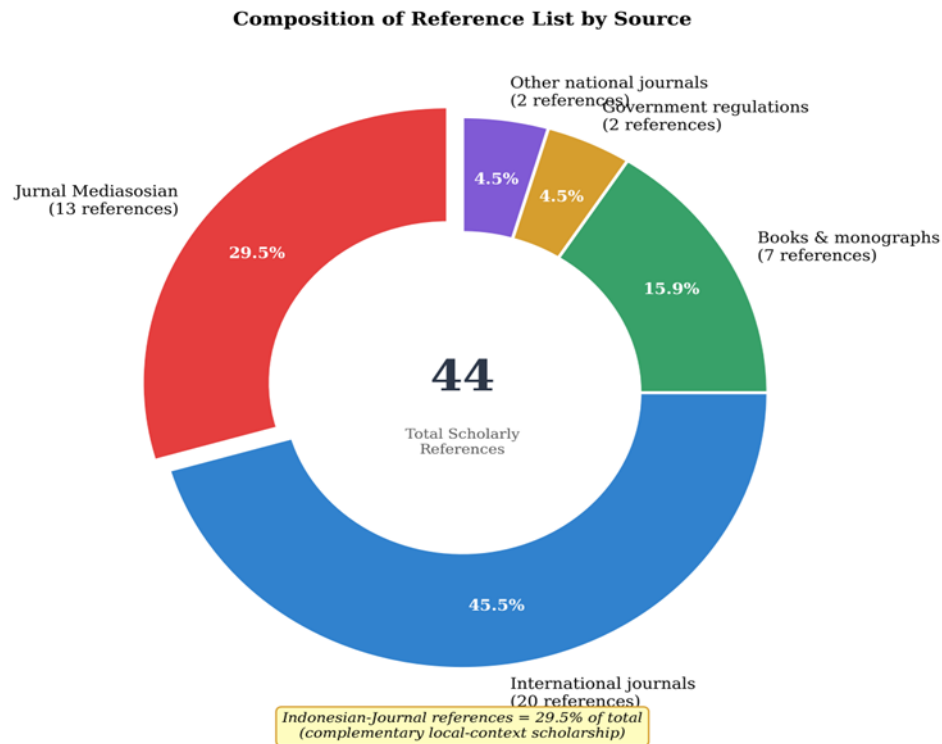


Figure 6. Composition of the Reference List by Source.

Source: Authors' Elaboration from the Manuscript Bibliography, 2026

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This paper has set out a research framework for the qualitative meta-synthesis of sixty undergraduate field studies of municipal digital government in Malang City. The framework treats the corpus as data in its own right—amenable to systematic re-interpretation through meta-ethnography. A preliminary cluster-by-cluster reading surfaces seven line-of-argument patterns: from the primacy of citizen-interface depth, through contrasts between national-mandate and locally originated platforms, to a systemic co-production gap that touches every cluster except D-Cards. If these patterns survive formal translation, the contribution will be twofold: a portfolio-level diagnosis of one city's digital transition, and a methodological demonstration that qualitative meta-synthesis offers a tractable response to the methodological individualism that has long marked Indonesian public administration scholarship.

For practitioners, two implications follow. The Government of Malang City may consider sharpening the inclusion design of its less co-productive platforms by adapting elements of the D-Cards model. The Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform may consider revising the SPBE evaluation grid so that citizen-interface depth—not only architectural completeness—is measured among its indicators.

## FURTHER STUDY

Four limitations and follow-up directions are acknowledged. First, the corpus is geographically bounded to Malang City; the line-of-argument should be read as analytically rather than statistically generalisable. Second, the corpus is institutionally bounded to a single department; replication on corpora from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Indonesia, and Universitas Padjadjaran would provide comparative leverage. Third, the formal synthesis as designed in the Methodology section must be executed with dual coding to validate the seven tentative patterns. Fourth, the D-Cards cluster warrants dedicated qualitative study as a critical case of co-productive design, with attention to its replicability in other cities.

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