



DIGITAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE QUALITY RESEARCH: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF SCOPUS-INDEXED PUBLICATIONS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
DOI: 10.52932/jfmr.v4i3en.1082 <i>Received:</i> August 24, 2025 <i>Accepted:</i> March 21, 2026 <i>Published:</i> July 25, 2026 Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, Digital government, Digital service quality, E-government, Online public service, Science mapping Article classification: Research paper JEL codes: L88, M30, M38	Purpose – This study provides a bibliometric review of the literature on e-government and service quality to identify major research themes, influential contributors, intellectual structures, and emerging research directions. Design/methodology/approach – Bibliometric analysis was conducted on Scopus-indexed publications published between 2001 and 2025. Performance analysis examined publication trends, citations, leading authors, journals, countries, and collaboration networks, while science mapping identified the conceptual, intellectual, and social structures of the field through co-citation, co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence analyses. Findings – Research on e-government and service quality has grown rapidly over the past decade. Three major knowledge clusters were identified, highlighting the evolution of the field from technology adoption toward digital transformation, governance, and citizen-centered service quality. The findings also reveal persistent disparities in digital public service quality between developed and developing countries and identify emerging research opportunities in digital governance, public value, and technology-enabled service delivery. Originality/value – By integrating performance analysis with science mapping, this study offers a comprehensive overview of the intellectual evolution of e-government service quality research. It extends previous reviews by systematically mapping the field's knowledge structure and identifying key research gaps and future directions. Practical implications – The findings provide policymakers and public administrators with evidence-based insights to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of digital government initiatives aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of online public services. Social implications – The study contributes to the advancement of more transparent, inclusive, and citizen-centered digital public services, supporting sustainable public sector transformation and improved public trust.

1. Introduction

The digital transformation of public administration has accelerated the development of digital government, with e-government serving as a core mechanism for delivering public services through digital platforms. Digital government refers to the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to transform governance processes and public service delivery, while e-government specifically focuses on the application of ICTs, particularly Internet-based technologies, to facilitate interactions between governments and citizens (Rawat, 2020). This transformation aims to improve administrative efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and citizen engagement, while promoting broader governance outcomes such as openness, innovation, and public trust (Sangki, 2018). A fundamental objective of e-government initiatives is to enhance the quality of online public services. As citizens increasingly rely on digital channels to access government services, service quality has become a key indicator of digital government performance. Well-designed e-government systems can simplify administrative procedures, improve accessibility, and increase user satisfaction when digital services effectively meet citizens' expectations (Paselle et al., 2025). Consequently, online public service quality has emerged as a critical research topic in digital government studies.

Despite significant progress, the implementation and effectiveness of digital government remain uneven across countries. Developing economies continue to face challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, limited institutional capacity, digital inequality, and organizational resistance to change, which constrain the quality of online public services (Paselle et al., 2025). To better understand these challenges, researchers have increasingly adapted traditional service quality frameworks, particularly SERVQUAL, to digital government contexts by incorporating dimensions such as ease of use, system reliability, security, privacy, and trust (Paselle et al., 2025).

The growing importance of digital government has led to a rapid expansion of related academic research. However, existing review studies remain fragmented. Some reviews focus primarily on citizens' adoption and acceptance of e-government services (Tremblay-Cantin et al., 2023), while others examine service quality models in online and mobile government contexts (Desmal et al., 2022; Sá et al., 2016). Recent studies have also explored the evolution of digital government from leadership and bibliometric perspectives (Elmatsani, 2024; Song et al., 2024). Although these studies provide valuable insights, they do not comprehensively examine the intellectual structure linking digital government, e-government, and online public service quality. Furthermore, broader review studies (e.g., Arias et al., 2019; Mohamed & Mohammed, 2023) are largely based on traditional narrative approaches, which are often constrained by limited search strategies, narrow temporal coverage, and restricted database selection. As a result, they provide only a partial understanding of the evolution, thematic structure, and knowledge base of this research field. A more systematic and data-driven review is therefore needed to identify the dominant research themes, intellectual foundations, and emerging directions of digital government and online public service quality research.

Bibliometric analysis has become an effective approach for synthesizing large bodies of scientific literature. Supported by comprehensive databases such as Scopus and Web of Science and visualization tools including VOSviewer, CiteSpace, Gephi, and Leximancer, bibliometric methods enable researchers to evaluate publication performance while mapping the conceptual, intellectual, and social structures of a research field (Donthu et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021; Öztürk et al., 2024). Performance analysis examines research productivity and impact, whereas science mapping reveals relationships among publications through citation, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, keyword co-occurrence, and collaboration networks (Baker et al., 2020;

Donthu et al., 2021; Tunger & Eulerich, 2018; Verma & Gustafsson, 2020). Accordingly, this study conducts a bibliometric analysis of the literature on e-government and online public service quality using science mapping techniques. Specifically, it aims to identify the major research themes, influential authors, leading journals, highly cited publications, and contributing countries, while examining the conceptual, intellectual, and social structures of the field. By addressing the limitations of previous reviews, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of e-government service quality research and identifies future research opportunities.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Bibliometric analysis and science mapping approach*

Bibliometric analysis, a method that enables a comprehensive review of all literature relevant to any research field, has been receiving increasing attention (Öztürk et al., 2024). Advanced bibliometric analysis is a reliable tool that objectively evaluates the global impact of scientific work, uncovers research structures and interdisciplinarity, and traces knowledge flows and socio-economic issues (Donthu et al., 2021; van Raan, 2014). Owing to its methodological advantages and practical convenience, bibliometric analysis has recently been extensively applied in business and management, facilitated by advancements in database processing, software tools, and visualization techniques (Öztürk et al., 2024). The main methods of science mapping include co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-word analysis, and co-authorship analysis (Chen et al., 2023; Donthu et al., 2021). Early works primarily explored technological adoption and digital divide issues, while more recent studies have examined user experience, mobile government, and smart governance as extensions of the traditional e-government paradigm (Yildiz, 2007). Geographic patterns also show that most research has been concentrated in

developed economies, though emerging markets have gained more attention in recent years as governments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America expand their digital service infrastructures (Alcaide Muñoz et al., 2017; Heeks & Bailur, 2007). Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence, blockchain, and data analytics in e-government systems raises new challenges and opportunities for service quality evaluation (Wirtz & Müller, 2019).

2.2. *Bibliometric analyses of digital government and online public service quality*

Bibliometric analyses have been increasingly applied to examine the development, structure, and evolution of digital government and e-government research. Using the Web of Science database, Almeida et al. (2014) analyzed 4,225 publications from 1986 to 2012, providing a comprehensive overview of publication trends, leading authors, institutions, and countries, as well as citation patterns over time. Similarly, Rodríguez Bolívar et al. (2016) further emphasized structural weaknesses in the field, pointing to insufficient theoretical development and marked disparities in research impact between developed and developing countries.

Subsequent bibliometric studies expanded the geographical and thematic scope of analysis. Using the Scopus database, Dias (2014) examined Portuguese e-government research and revealed limited thematic diversity and methodological sophistication, while Dias (2019) extended this approach to the Ibero-American context, identifying key contributors, collaboration patterns, and national research profiles. At a broader disciplinary level, Arias et al. (2019), analyzing Web of Science publications from 2002 to 2017, classified major e-government subfields and identified a set of influential works shaping the intellectual foundations of the domain. More recently, Ramzy and Ibrahim (2022) conducted one of the most comprehensive bibliometric surveys to date, analyzing over 21,000 documents from the Digital Government Reference Library and Scopus.

Their findings demonstrate rapid growth in e-government research, strong dominance of English-language publications, and higher citation impacts for open access studies.

Although previous bibliometric studies have provided valuable insights into the evolution of e-government research, they have primarily focused on publication trends, citation performance, and broad thematic developments. For example, Song et al. (2024) identified the transition of e-government research from technology-oriented issues to governance-related themes, such as transparency, user acceptance, and smart cities, while Elmatrani et al. (2024) emphasized the growing role of leadership in digital transformation and digital government implementation. However, these studies largely examine digital government as a broad research domain, with limited attention to online public service quality as a distinct area of inquiry. Consequently, the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of research at the intersection of digital government and online public service quality remain insufficiently explored. To address this gap, the present study conducts a bibliometric and science mapping analysis to systematically examine publication trends, influential contributors, knowledge structures, and emerging research themes, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of how service quality research has evolved within the broader digital government literature.

3. Research method

This study follows the bibliometric guidelines proposed by Donthu et al. (2021). Data were retrieved from the Scopus database, one of the most comprehensive sources of peer-reviewed literature, on August 2, 2025. The search focused on the intersection of e-government and online service quality, using keywords such as “digital government,” “e-government,” and “online service quality.” Only peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and review articles were included to ensure data quality.

The retrieved records were exported in CSV format and analyzed using CiteSpace to perform co-citation, co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence analyses, enabling the identification of the field’s intellectual, social, and conceptual structures. Scopus was selected because of its extensive coverage, standardized bibliographic metadata, reliable citation indexing, and compatibility with bibliometric software, making it a widely adopted data source for science mapping studies (Donthu et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021).

Detailed information on language restrictions, document types, research time span, and the number of retrieved records is presented in Table 1. The retrieval was restricted to English-language publications within the time span of 2001-2025, and only articles, conference papers, conference reviews, and review articles were included. The retrieved records were exported into VOSviewer for further processing and bibliometric mapping. The software confirmed that no duplicate records existed, thereby validating the use of the full dataset as the research sample. This comprehensive dataset serves as the basis for analyzing the intellectual, conceptual, and social structures of research on e-government and service quality. Science mapping techniques, including citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis, were mainly employed in this study (Chen et al., 2023; Donthu et al., 2021) (*see Appendix 1 online*).

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Overviews

Publication trends

Figure 1 shows a steady growth in research on e-government and service quality between 2001 and 2025. Publication output remained limited during the early years (2001-2006), followed by rapid growth after 2007 as e-government initiatives expanded globally. Between 2013 and 2019, annual publications stabilized, indicating the consolidation and maturation of the field.

Since 2020, research output has increased markedly, with annual publications exceeding 40 and cumulative publications surpassing 480 by the end of 2024. This recent surge reflects the accelerated adoption of digital government, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified scholarly interest in online public service quality, user satisfaction, and trust. Overall, the sustained upward trend indicates that e-government research remains in a dynamic and evolving phase rather than a fully saturated domain, thereby continuing to attract scholarly interest. This observation is consistent with prior studies by Song et al. (2024) and Wirtz and Daiser (2018), who characterise e-government as an open and continuously developing research field offering diverse and multifaceted research opportunities. The findings of the present study further corroborate this view by demonstrating the field's sustained growth and expanding academic relevance (*see Appendix 2 online*).

Bibliometric analysis of countries and institutions

The country-level analysis reveals that research leadership in e-government and service quality is shaped not only by publication output but also by citation impact and international collaboration. While emerging economies such as Indonesia and China lead in research productivity, China demonstrates greater scholarly influence through higher citation counts. Countries including Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United States exhibit strong international collaboration, enhancing knowledge diffusion and research impact. Meanwhile, the United States and the United Kingdom maintain significant academic influence despite lower publication volumes, reflecting their strengths in theoretical and methodological contributions. Overall, the findings suggest that research leadership is driven by a combination of publication productivity, research quality, and global collaboration rather than output alone (*see Appendix 3 online*).

Results of citation sources analysis

The citation source analysis reveals a complementary publication structure in e-government and service quality research. Conference proceedings and book series primarily facilitate the dissemination of emerging and technology-oriented studies, whereas a smaller number of high-impact journals form the intellectual core of the field through strong theoretical and methodological contributions. These findings highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the field, where conferences promote innovation and knowledge exchange, while leading journals shape long-term research agendas and scholarly impact (*see Appendix 4 online*).

4.2. Science Mapping-Based Bibliometric analysis

Citation analysis

The citation analysis identifies the most influential works shaping the field of e-government and service quality (*see Appendix 5 online*). The most cited study is Teo et al. (2008), with 1,160 citations, underscoring the pivotal role of trust in determining e-government success. This dominance highlights that trust is a foundational construct in explaining both adoption and effectiveness. Following this, Gilbert et al. (2004), with 422 citations emphasize the barriers and benefits in adopting e-government, reflecting early scholarly interest in implementation challenges (*see Appendix 5 online*).

More recent contributions, such as Li and Shang (2020) with 333 citations, shift the focus toward service quality, perceived value, and continuous use intention, illustrating a growing concern for user experience and long-term engagement. Other highly cited works, including Papadomichelaki and Mentzas (2012) (237 citations) and Rana et al. (2015) (233 citations), contribute significantly by introducing and validating measurement models such as the E-GovQual scale and integrated IS success

models. Meanwhile, studies like Oliveira and Welch (2013) on social media in governance and Floropoulos et al. (2010) on taxation systems broaden the thematic scope of the field. Overall, citation analysis demonstrates that the most impactful contributions revolve around trust, adoption challenges, service quality, and success measurement frameworks, establishing these as the central pillars of e-government research (*see Appendix 5 online*).

Co-citation analysis

Co-citation analysis is particularly valuable for scholars aiming to uncover seminal works and the foundational intellectual structure of a field (Donthu et al., 2021). Among the four major techniques in science mapping, it has become the most widely adopted, as it effectively identifies publications that have received substantial scholarly attention in the past and highlights those frequently cited together within a specific research domain (Chen et al., 2023). The results of the analysis reveal that Papadomichelaki and Mentzas (2012) stands out with 69 co-citation links, demonstrating that the E-GovQual scale serves as a methodological cornerstone, frequently referenced alongside other frameworks in empirical studies. Likewise, Gilbert et al. (2004) and Lee et al. (2011), each with 25 links, occupy central positions in discussions on adoption factors, service quality, and trust, functioning as complementary references across diverse streams of research. Floropoulos et al. (2010), with 20 links, and Tan et al. (2013), with 14 links, also emerge as important bridging works, particularly in the context of service quality assessments and IS success models. Interestingly, although Teo et al. (2008) is the most cited study overall, it registers zero co-citation links, indicating its role as a seminal yet standalone contribution rather than one integrated into broader theoretical conversations. In contrast, more recent studies, such as Li and Shang (2020) and Belanche et al. (2014), show limited co-citation connectivity (four links each), reflecting both their relative

novelty and the gradual process of integration into scholarly networks (*see Appendix 6 online*).

One dominant research tradition adopts a citizen-centered perspective, emphasizing service quality, trust, and technology acceptance as key determinants of e-government success (eg., Davis, 1989). Subsequent studies extend these ideas to public-sector contexts by emphasizing trust and satisfaction as critical mediating mechanisms in e-government adoption (Carter & Bélanger, 2005). Empirical work in this tradition consistently frames e-government effectiveness through citizens' lived experiences and evaluations of online services, as illustrated by research examining satisfaction with government portals and service delivery outcomes in developing-country settings (e.g., Alawneh et al., 2013). Methodologically, this stream is reinforced by robust measurement and modeling approaches, particularly structural equation modeling, which enable more precise assessment of latent constructs such as perceived service quality and trust (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The development of multi-dimensional instruments for assessing e-government service quality further reflects this focus on capturing user perceptions systematically and comparably (Papadomichelaki & Mentzas, 2012).

In contrast, a second intellectual tradition adopts a systemic perspective, viewing e-government implementation as dependent on organizational readiness, technological infrastructure, and strategic alignment, while emphasizing that system quality, information quality, and service quality jointly determine organizational and societal outcomes (Petter et al., 2013; Seddon, 1997). At the same time, stage-based models of e-government development highlight the progressive nature of digital transformation in government, emphasizing that successful online service delivery depends on coordinated institutional change rather than isolated technological adoption (Layne & Lee, 2001). Overall, the co-citation patterns suggest that e-government and service quality

research has evolved through the integration of user-centered perspectives with system-oriented frameworks, highlighting the need to jointly consider individual experiences and institutional, organizational, and technological contexts to better understand digital government performance (*see Appendix 6 online*).

Co-word (keyword co-occurrence) analysis

Keyword co-occurrence analysis is a bibliometric technique used to identify the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of a research field by examining relationships among frequently co-occurring keywords (Donthu et al., 2021; Radhakrishnan et al., 2017). Based on the VOSviewer visualization results, some major thematic clusters emerge from the dataset (Figure 4), reflecting the multidimensional nature of e-government and online public service quality research.

Theme 1: Citizen adoption, service quality, and user satisfaction

This theme examines citizens' adoption and continued use of e-government services by integrating technology acceptance, service quality, trust, and user satisfaction. Studies consistently show that user acceptance is shaped by the combined effects of system quality, perceived value, governance credibility, and organizational readiness, particularly in developing countries. Representative contributions by Rana et al. (2015), Shareef et al. (2011), Susanto and Aljoza (2015), Teo et al. (2008), Floropoulos et al. (2010), and Papadomichelaki and Mentzas (2012) demonstrate that service quality dimensions and management practices jointly influence satisfaction, continuance intention, and the overall effectiveness of digital public services.

Theme 2: E-service quality evaluation and digital service platforms

This theme links e-government with the broader e-service and information systems literature by applying established theories to evaluate digital public services and government platforms. Seminal frameworks proposed by

Delone and McLean (2003), Parasuraman et al. (2005), and Zeithaml et al. (2002) provide the conceptual foundations, while studies by Papadomichelaki and Mentzas (2012), Floropoulos et al. (2010), Alawneh et al. (2013), Li and Shang (2020), Sá et al. (2016), and Tan et al. (2013) assess website usability, information quality, portal design, and service performance. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the applicability of e-service quality models while emphasizing the need to adapt them to public sector contexts.

Theme 3: Digital transformation, ICT, and governance performance

This theme focuses on the strategic role of digital transformation, ICT, and emerging technologies in strengthening public administration and governance performance. Representative studies by Gilbert et al. (2004), Oliveira and Welch (2013), Belanche et al. (2014), Li and Shang (2020), Alcaide Muñoz et al. (2017), Rana et al. (2015), and Papadomichelaki and Mentzas (2012) show that successful digital government depends on technological capability, organizational readiness, leadership commitment, institutional alignment, and effective implementation. The literature also highlights the growing contribution of AI and digital infrastructure to improving efficiency, transparency, and long-term socio-economic value.

Theme 4: Technology-enabled citizen engagement and public value

This theme highlights the role of digital technologies and social media in fostering citizen engagement, transparency, accountability, and public value creation. Studies by Al-Hujran et al. (2015), Oliveira and Welch (2013), Shareef et al. (2011), Susanto and Aljoza (2015), and Tan et al. (2013) demonstrate that interactive technologies strengthen two-way communication between governments and citizens, supporting participatory governance, trust, and institutional legitimacy across diverse national contexts.

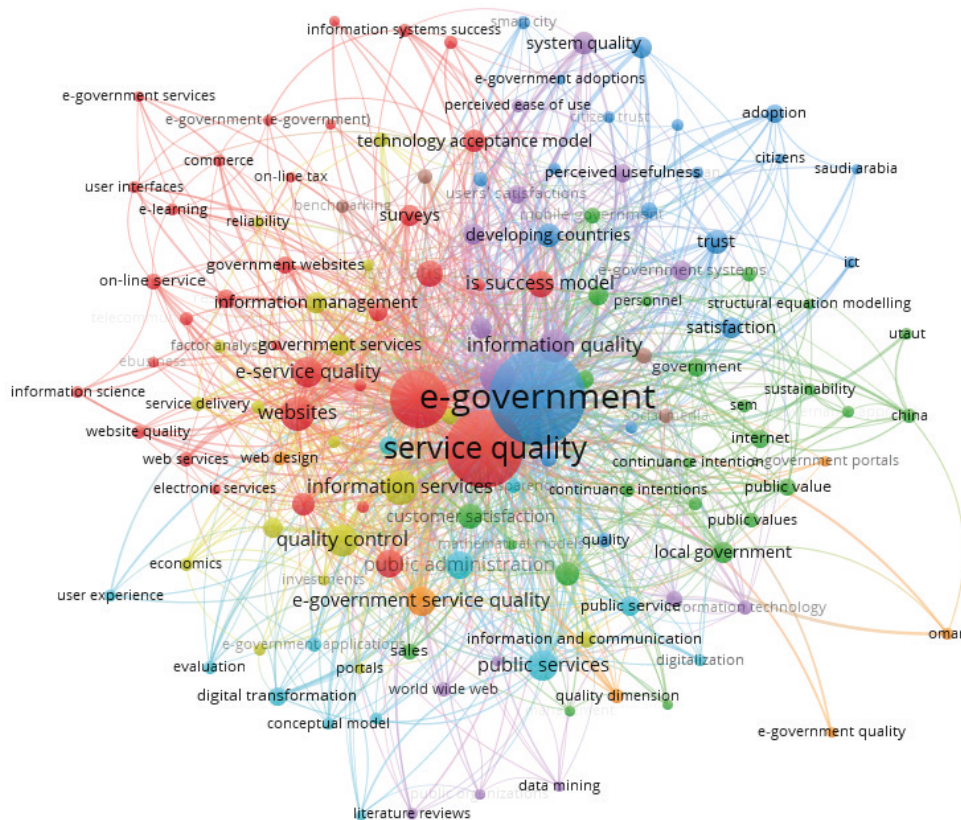


Figure 1. Keywords cluster analysis

5. Conclusion and implications

5.1. Conclusion

This study provides a systematic bibliometric review of 505 publications on digital government and online public service quality published between 2001 and 2025. By integrating performance analysis with science mapping, it reveals the field's intellectual evolution, major research themes, influential contributors, and collaboration patterns. The findings show that research has evolved from technology adoption and implementation toward service quality, digital transformation, public value, and governance performance. Although publication output has grown steadily, research impact remains concentrated in developed countries despite increasing contributions from emerging economies. The analysis also highlights the enduring importance of e-service quality, information systems success, and technology acceptance

theories, alongside emerging themes such as citizen co-production, public value, and data-driven governance, demonstrating the field's continued development and future research potential.

5.2. Theoretical implications

This study contributes theoretically by revealing the intellectual structure and evolution of digital government and online public service quality research. The identified thematic clusters demonstrate that citizen behaviour, service quality, governance, and organizational capabilities form an interconnected knowledge base, suggesting that future studies should adopt more integrated perspectives rather than relying solely on user-centred models.

The findings also highlight important opportunities for theory development. Although the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the IS Success Model, and e-service

quality frameworks remain the dominant theoretical foundations, their application has been concentrated in developed-country settings. This raises questions about their applicability in emerging economies, where institutional capacity, digital infrastructure, and public trust differ substantially. In addition, governance capability, public value, user experience, and organizational implementation remain underrepresented despite their growing importance in explaining digital government performance.

Finally, the analysis indicates that the field is still dominated by cross-sectional studies, limiting understanding of how trust, service quality, satisfaction, and public value evolve over time. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal, multi-level, and interdisciplinary approaches to extend existing theories and better capture the dynamic nature of digital government.

5.3. Managerial implications

The findings offer several implications for policymakers and public managers. The prominence of service quality, trust, and user satisfaction in the literature suggests that successful digital government initiatives require not only technological investment but also strong governance, organizational capability, and effective public management. Public agencies should therefore prioritize citizen-centred service design, continuous service quality evaluation, and user-friendly digital platforms to improve accessibility and satisfaction across diverse user groups.

The analysis also highlights the importance of strengthening inter-agency coordination, managerial capability, and institutional capacity to support effective digital transformation. Finally, evaluation of digital government initiatives should extend beyond efficiency measures to include transparency, inclusiveness, accountability, and public value, enabling more sustainable and citizen-oriented digital governance, particularly in emerging economies.

5.3. Research limitations and future research directions

This study has several limitations. First, it relies exclusively on the Scopus database, which, despite its broad coverage of high-quality publications, may exclude relevant studies from other databases and non-English sources. Second, as a bibliometric analysis, it focuses on publication trends, citation patterns, and knowledge structures rather than critically evaluating the methodological quality or empirical findings of individual studies. Finally, the literature remains dominated by cross-sectional evidence, with relatively few longitudinal, comparative, and multi-level studies, particularly in developing and emerging economies. Future research should integrate multiple databases, combine bibliometric and systematic review approaches, and employ longitudinal, cross-national, and mixed-method designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital government and online public service quality.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI Usage Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Grammarly to assist with academic language editing, improving clarity, grammar, and manuscript structure. The authors carefully reviewed, revised, and verified all generated content and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final manuscript.

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