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Evaluating the governance of public services in urban construction: insights from Hanoi's experience

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Abstract: This paper evaluates citizens' satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi, Vietnam. The authors investigate the primary factors influencing satisfaction levels by conducting survey questionnaires (N = 362) and utilising the SERVQUAL-based approach. The findings indicate that citizen satisfaction is substantially determined by the quality of staff services ($\beta = 0.139$, $p < 0.1$), fees, procedures, and information ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < 0.01$), while facilities are not a determining factor ($\beta = 0.0474$, $p > 0.1$). Personal and social characteristics, including marital status, educational background, type of procedure, level of comprehension, and experience, also influence satisfaction. These results offer a glimpse into the areas in which local governments must improve in order to improve the efficiency of urban management and the satisfaction of citizens. They also propose potential policy directions that could be applied to cities with comparable contexts.

Keywords: citizen satisfaction; public services; urban construction; policy; Vietnam.

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1 Introduction

The rapid globalisation and urbanisation of developing countries are significantly reshaping their major cities (United Nations, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2016). In this transformation, public administrative services in the construction sector play a crucial role in facilitating infrastructure development, urban planning, and land-use security (World Bank, 2015; Asian Development Bank, 2013). The efficiency of these services not only affects the speed and quality of urban development but also has a direct impact on citizen trust and satisfaction with governmental institutions (World Bank, 2015; United Nations, 2018). However, resource constraints, bureaucratic complexity, and overlapping administrative responsibilities often hinder the effectiveness of public services in developing countries, leading to delays in urban projects and decreased citizen satisfaction (Bauhr and Carlitz, 2020; Alhawawsha and Anisimov, 2019).

Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, serves as an ideal case study for evaluating citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector. As one of Vietnam's most rapidly developing urban centres, Hanoi faces pressing challenges in balancing urban expansion with efficient governance. Understanding citizen perspectives on service quality can offer valuable insights into current policy effectiveness and areas for reform. Furthermore, Hanoi's experience can serve as a model for other developing cities with similar socio-economic characteristics. This study aims to contribute to a sustainable urban development model by identifying key factors influencing citizen satisfaction and recommending policy improvements to enhance administrative service efficiency and transparency.

Although previous studies have extensively examined public service quality in developed countries (Lamsal and Gupta, 2022; Xie et al., 2022a), research on citizen satisfaction in public administrative services in rapidly developing economies like Vietnam remains limited. While Vietnam has made significant progress in socio-economic development, disparities persist in service quality, particularly in bureaucratic efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness (London, 2021; Rydström, 2010). This study seeks to bridge this gap by analysing citizen experiences, identifying service deficiencies, and proposing evidence-based policy solutions.

Given these considerations, this research is significant not only for Vietnam's ongoing administrative reforms but also for other developing nations striving to enhance public service quality. The insights drawn from this study can provide valuable guidance for improving governance, increasing citizen satisfaction, and fostering sustainable urban development.

The structure of this paper is organised as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review, Section 3 describes the research methodology, Section 4 analyses the research results, Section 5 discusses the main findings, and Section 6 concludes with policy implications and future research directions.

2 Literature review

Citizen satisfaction with public services in urban construction is an essential aspect of urban governance and is influenced by various factors. Citizens' perceptions of fairness in service delivery, the quality and quantity of services provided, and citizen participation all significantly affect satisfaction levels (Ryzin, 2004; Collins et al., 2019; Xu and Zhu, 2020). Furthermore, service quality, trust, and satisfaction play decisive roles in citizens' loyalty to government e-services (Alkraiiji and Ameen, 2021).

Previous studies have also emphasised citizen perception as a policy tool for urban public services, with evidence showing that integrating citizen feedback can improve service delivery and overall satisfaction (Shan and Yu, 2014; Labaria et al., 2017). Additionally, the relationship between citizen satisfaction and citizen trust in the government is highlighted, underscoring the close link between satisfaction levels and trust (Salim et al., 2017).

Many studies have indicated a satisfaction gap between urban and rural citizens, showing that different perceptions of service quality between these areas can significantly impact satisfaction and loyalty to local governments (Romero-Subia et al., 2023). Furthermore, satisfaction with public services is a key factor in shaping government perception and trust (Lim and Lee, 2021).

Several studies have shown that citizen satisfaction with public administrative services is not only dependent on the actual quality of the services but also influenced by personal and social factors. Research by Ryzin and Charbonneau (2010) indicates that gender can affect satisfaction levels with public services, with women generally rating services lower than men. Age is also important, and satisfaction often decreases (Yang, 2018). Marital status has been shown to positively influence satisfaction, with married individuals frequently reporting higher satisfaction levels (Xie et al., 2022b). Higher education levels are typically associated with higher expectations for service quality and more stringent evaluations (Lamsal and Gupta, 2022). The type of administrative

procedures, understanding of service processes and requirements, and experiences with handling administrative procedures also affect citizen satisfaction (Feng et al., 2019). In summary, citizen satisfaction with public administrative services is a complex issue influenced by the quality and many personal and social factors, requiring a clear understanding and control to improve public service quality and better meet citizen needs.

One of the most widely theorised models used to evaluate and quantify satisfaction with public services is SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988). Specifically, SERVQUAL is a standard tool for evaluating customer satisfaction with public services such as healthcare (Kilbourne et al., 2004), public transportation (Liong et al., 2007), banking (Othman and Ismail, 2008), education (Tan and Kek, 2004), public safety (Donnelly et al., 2006), and local government services (Mokhlis et al., 2011). Besides SERVQUAL, another widely applied model in various fields is American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), proposed and developed by Fornell et al. (1996).

Research on this topic in transitional countries like Vietnam is theoretically and empirically limited. Generally, studies on public administrative services in Vietnam can be divided into three major groups:

- 1 the first group conducted by individuals and domestic scholars using traditional methods
- 2 the second group conducted by domestic and international organisations, focusing on qualitative analysis, practical assessment, index building, and proposing solutions;
- 3 the third group by individual researchers who build and calculate evaluation indices based on commonly used international models.

For the first group, a common feature of the studies is the direct analysis and assessment of administrative reform processes at the national or ministerial/sectoral, local levels, based on traditional concepts of simplifying procedures, methods, and commands set by higher authorities, thus being heavily descriptive and qualitative. Only a few of these studies evaluate and survey citizen opinions, particularly without considering citizen satisfaction and comfort. Some recent traditional studies include those by Đặng (2010), Lê (2010), Nguyen et al. (2022) and Nguyễn (2015).

In the second group, studies, surveys, documents, and reports on administrative procedures and processes funded by international and regional organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (2004), ActionAid Vietnam (2010) and OECD (2009) are more notable for their objectivity, scientific, and modern approach with extensive information and references from regional and international sources. Some Vietnamese organisations have collaborated with global organisations to build and calculate administrative indices. Notable examples include the Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in collaboration with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Public Administration Reform (PAR) index by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) by the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Vietnam.

The common feature of these index calculation projects is the limited reference to theoretical foundations. Researchers only provide the content for survey questionnaires, without or with little discussion on the reasons and suitability of the choices. Therefore,

their results are heavily experimental, application-oriented, and have almost no theoretical contribution. The setting up and data collection methods also seem to lack a basis for ensuring reliability and accuracy. Additionally, the differences in evaluation results between localities or ministries are minimal, reducing the significance of classification and comparison.

This limitation has been initially addressed through the third group, which includes individual researchers building and calculating evaluation indices based on commonly developed and used international models. However, limited research has examined the applicability of SERVQUAL within the public administrative service sector, particularly in the context of local government services in rapidly urbanising cities like Hanoi. Existing studies on service quality in Vietnam's public sector have predominantly concentrated on citizen satisfaction, often lacking a structured evaluation model. For instance, Bui et al. (2022) highlight that while qualitative assessments of service quality are common, there is a pressing need for quantitative approaches that utilise established models like SERVQUAL to systematically evaluate public services. Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2020) emphasise the importance of understanding the determinants of citizen satisfaction, suggesting that existing frameworks may not adequately capture the complexities of public service delivery in Vietnam, particularly in the context of electronic government services. Additionally, research by Tung and Ly (2021) indicates that previous studies have primarily focused on qualitative measures, underscoring a gap in structured evaluations that could enhance the understanding of service quality in the public sector. This indicates a significant opportunity for future research to develop comprehensive models that can effectively assess and improve service quality in Vietnam's public sector.

Our study addresses these gaps by applying SERVQUAL to evaluate the quality of public administrative services in Hanoi, an area where government-citizen interactions play a crucial role in shaping policy effectiveness and public trust. Unlike prior research that mainly focuses on general satisfaction metrics, our study provides a structured, dimension-based analysis, offering deeper insights into the strengths and weaknesses of service provision. This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating how SERVQUAL can be adapted to the administrative sector and highlighting key contextual challenges, such as regulatory complexities and digital transformation efforts in public service delivery.

3 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical framework

In this article, the authors use the theoretical foundation of the SERVQUAL model, a popular and helpful tool for assessing customer satisfaction by measuring service quality from the customer's perspective. This model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988), is still widely used in various industries to improve and maintain service quality. SERVQUAL was chosen because of its established structure in evaluating service quality across five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Unlike alternative models such as SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), which measures service performance alone, SERVQUAL captures the expectation-perception

gap, making it more suitable for assessing citizen satisfaction with public administrative services where expectations of procedural efficiency are crucial.

Additionally, SERVQUAL has been successfully adapted in similar urban governance studies. Globally, researchers frequently adjust the SERVQUAL model to suit the specific characteristics of local public services. For example, Manzin et al.'s (2012) study in Slovenia successfully adjusted the factors and criteria of the SERVQUAL model by using elements such as staff, information, service access, facilities, procedures, and pricing to assess quality and citizen satisfaction. Overall, adjusting these models helps more accurately reflect the specifics of public administrative services and provides important information for improving public services.

In Vietnam, some studies evaluating the quality of services and citizen satisfaction with public administrative services have also adjusted the SERVQUAL model to fit the specific context. For example, Lê (2011) identified seven factors in assessing satisfaction with district-level public administrative services in Da Nang. Meanwhile, Cao and Lê (2011) used factors such as staff quality, procedures, facilities, and accessibility in their study in Da Lat.

Table 1 Factors and components in the SERVQUAL model applied to Hanoi

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Components</i>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-constructed, high-quality headquarters and offices • Attractive, clean, and convenient interior and facilities • Modern, useful equipment and machinery
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled, knowledgeable about procedures • Good attitude and sense of service • Efficient and quick work processing • Responsible, objective, impartial, and non-self-serving work handling
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable, convenient, easy-to-apply requirements for procedures • Appropriate requirements for forms, documents, and paperwork • Executed and resolved as per regulations and announcements
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient location of headquarters and offices • Suitable working hours • Clear, transparent, easily understandable information and guidance provided at headquarters, offices, and on the internet • Easy, quick, and convenient contact for work and feedback through phone, internet, mail, and direct meetings
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for the nature and complexity of procedures • Affordable for citizens • Collected as per regulations, with no additional charges

Source: Author's summary

Based on the results of domestic and international studies in this field, the factors projected to evaluate citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi's districts are shown in Table 1.

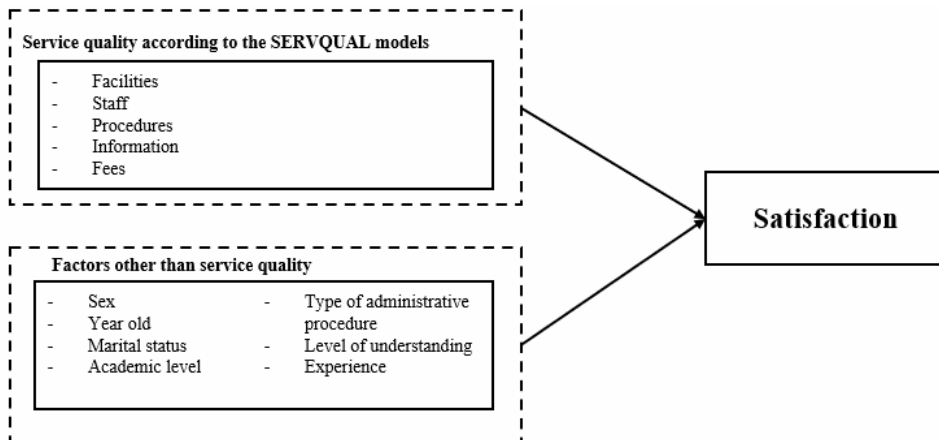
Recognising the unique nature of government services, we adapted SERVQUAL dimensions to better reflect public sector characteristics. Tangibility was expanded to include digital service accessibility, acknowledging the growing role of e-government in Hanoi. Assurance was adjusted to emphasise citizen trust in government employees' competence and integrity, as perceptions of transparency and fairness are crucial. Responsiveness was refined to assess bureaucratic efficiency, focusing on procedural delays and administrative burdens that impact satisfaction. Additionally, the survey instrument was contextualised with terminology adjustments to ensure clarity in evaluating construction-related public services.

Table 2 Description and coding of control variables

<i>Control variable</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Coding</i>
Gender	What is your gender?	0 for male, 1 for female
Age	How old are you?	Continuous integer
Marital status	What is your marital status?	0 for single, 1 for married
Educational level	What is your highest educational qualification?	1 for high school, 2 for university/college, 3 for post-graduate
Type of administrative procedure	Which type of administrative procedure are you currently undertaking?	1 for construction permit, 2 for repair permit, 3 for other procedures
Level of understanding of public service	What is your level of understanding of the procedures and requirements of this public administrative service before undertaking this procedure?	Scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well)
Experience in handling administrative procedures	How many times have you handled this type of administrative procedure before?	Integer, representing the number of times the participant has previously undertaken similar administrative procedures

Source: Author's summary

Figure 1 Research framework



Source: Author's summary

Additionally, based on previous studies, the authors supplement the model with control variables to evaluate the impact of personal and social factors on citizen satisfaction with public administrative services. These factors include gender, marital status, educational level, type of administrative procedure, level of understanding of service processes and requirements, and experience in handling administrative procedures (Ryzin and Charbonneau, 2010; Yang, 2018; Lamsal and Gupta, 2022). Table 2 briefly describes how these variables were collected and coded.

Based on the above analysis, the proposed research model framework is presented in Figure 1.

3.2 Data

The research data was collected through a survey questionnaire targeting citizens who had used public administrative services in the construction sector across various districts of Hanoi. The questionnaire was developed based on a combination of established theoretical models, prior empirical research, and expert validation. The SERVQUAL model was used as the core framework, enabling a structured assessment of service quality across key dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Additionally, a literature review on citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in both developed and developing countries helped refine the criteria to ensure relevance to the urban governance context.

To ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability, a pilot survey was first conducted with ten experts specialising in public administration and urban construction. Their feedback led to minor refinements, including adjustments in wording for better comprehension and restructuring of certain questions to enhance response accuracy.

Following the pilot phase, the finalised questionnaire was administered to 400 citizens, yielding 362 valid responses for analysis. The survey employed a 7-point Likert scale (1 = 'very poor' to 7 = 'very good') to measure perceptions of service quality. A stratified random sampling approach was used to ensure a representative sample from diverse groups across ten key districts, covering both central urban areas and suburban locations. This approach captured variations in service experiences based on geographic and demographic differences.

To minimise selection bias, data collection was conducted at multiple service points, including local administrative offices and online platforms, ensuring participation from individuals with different levels of accessibility to public services. Additionally, follow-up interviews were conducted with initially reluctant participants to reduce non-response bias. Demographic balancing across age, gender, and education levels further strengthened the reliability and representativeness of the dataset.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The survey was conducted with 362 people using public administrative services in the construction sector districts of Hanoi. The sample includes the following key demographic characteristics: 67% are male, and 33% are female. The average age of participants was 40, ranging from 25 to 60. Regarding marital status, 88% of participants

were married, and 12% were single. Regarding educational level, 55% have a university degree, 26% have a college degree, and 19% have a postgraduate degree. Participants' experience using public administrative services was also recorded, with 45% having used the service 1–2 times, 35% 3–4 times, and 20% more than five times. Detailed characteristics of the survey sample are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of survey subjects (unit: %)

District										
Ba Dinh	Cau Giay	Dong Da	Ha Dong	Hai Ba Trung	Hoan Kiem	Hoang Mai	Long Bien	Tay Ho	Thanh Xuan	Tu Liem
15.7	17.9	21.3	0.6	9.5	18.2	0.8	5.9	4.2	5.3	0.6
Sex		Marital			Number or child					
Male	Female	Single		Married	0	1	2	3	3+	
67	33	12		88	11	11	66	9	3	
Educational					Age					
High school	College/university		Graduated		18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	60+	
26	55		19		10.9	33.6	29.8	15.6	10.0	
Occupation of surveyed subjects										
Doctor/pharmacist		Worker	Public servants	Service	Teacher	Retire	Business	Engineer		
2.8		10.4	18.8	9.0	5.0	6.2	20.2	3.4		
Drive	Arts/journalism		Free	Housewife	Manage	Student	Office			
2.2	2.5		6.7	3.9	1.1	1.1	6.7			
Level of proficiency in administrative procedures						Number of times administrative procedures have been performed				
None	Little	Moderate	Well	Very well		0	1	2	2+	
4.8	30.3	62.6	2.2	0		3.1	68.6	22.7	5.6	
Type of public administrative services in the construction sector that people use										
Issuing construction permits					Issuing licenses to upgrade and repair houses					
42.3					57.7					

Source: Author's calculation results

4.2 EFA analysis results

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the main factors affecting people's satisfaction with public administrative services. The results of KMO and Bartlett's tests show that the data are suitable for conducting EFA (KMO > 0.8, $p < 0.001$). Three main factors were identified including:

- procedures, information and fees
- staff
- facilities.

4.3 Reliability test of the measurement scales

The reliability of the scales is tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results show that all scales have Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.7, demonstrating the high reliability of the scales used in the study.

4.4 Quality of public administrative services in the construction sector in districts of Hanoi

Table 4 shows that overall, people's perceived quality of public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi's districts is higher than previously expected, although the difference is not much (5.236/7 vs. 5.219/7). Accordingly, administrative services issue certificates. People rate construction permits in Hanoi at 1.85/2.5.

Table 4 Expectation vs. perceived reality of public service quality

Overall quality		Factor		Average value
Expectation	5.219	F1	Procedure, information and fees	5.212
		F2	Staff	5.183
		F3	Facilities	5.262
Perceived reality	5.236	F1	Procedure, information and fees	5.191
		F2	Staff	5.243
		F3	Facilities	5.281

Source: Author's survey results

The difference between people's actual perceptions and expectations for each factor is insignificant. People rated the two factors, staff, and facilities, higher after experiencing reality than expected, while the factors procedures, information, and fees had the opposite result. However, people evaluate the quality factors when expected and perceived in reality relatively close to each other, fluctuating around 5.2/7 (a little above the fair level). These results indicate that, in general, individuals have a clear understanding of the characteristics of public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi districts. Consequently, there is a minimal discrepancy between expectations and actual perceptions, and each factor's factors and component criteria are rated relatively equally.

4.5 Regression results

Based on the theoretical basis of the SERVQUAL model, people's satisfaction is directly determined by the difference in actual assessment compared to expectations of the quality of public administrative services in the construction sector. Accordingly, the regression model is built as follows:

$$\text{Satisfaction} = f(F_1, F_2, F_3, \text{controls})$$

In which, F_1 , F_2 , F_3 are independent variables measured based on the average value between the difference in actual assessment and expectation of service quality according to three groups:

- 1 procedures, information and fees
- 2 staff
- 3 facilities.

The vector of control variables includes gender, age, marital status, education level, administrative procedures, level of understanding, and experience handling administrative procedures. The regression results using the OLS method are presented in Table 5.

In model 1, the authors only use main factors such as procedures, information and fees, staff, and facilities. Model 2 adds individual control variables, improving model fit. To further control the influence of location factors, model 3 adds regional effects. The regression results on the impact of independent variables on satisfaction are generally consistent. Since model 3 has the highest level of variation explanation, showing better explanation ability for people's satisfaction, the author will specifically analyse the results in model 3.

The research results show that while the factors of procedures, information, and fees ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < 0.01$) and staff ($\beta = 0.139$, $p < 0.1$) both impact on citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector, facilities do not ($\beta = 0.0474$, $p > 0.1$). Regarding control variables, the results show that gender does not have a significant impact on satisfaction ($\beta = -0.0594$, $p > 0.1$), consistent with the study by Ryzin and Charbonneau (2010). Age also does not have a significant impact ($\beta = -0.00206$, $p > 0.1$), similar to Yang's (2018) findings. Marital status has a positive effect, with married individuals showing higher levels of satisfaction ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < 0.01$), in line with Xie et al. (2022b). Higher educational levels are associated with higher satisfaction, particularly among those with university/college and postgraduate degrees ($\beta = 0.144$ and 0.249 , respectively, both $p < 0.01$), reflecting higher expectations and more stringent evaluations by this group, as noted in the study by Lamsal and Gupta (2022).

The type of administrative procedure also affects satisfaction, with more complex procedures, such as other types of procedures (e.g., issuance of land use rights certificates), having a negative impact ($\beta = -0.217$, $p < 0.05$), reflecting unwanted complexity and difficulty. Higher levels of understanding of the process and procedures lead to lower satisfaction ($\beta = -0.189$, $p < 0.01$), possibly due to disappointment when expectations are not met, as noted in the study by Bauhr and Carlitz (2020). Positive experience in handling administrative procedures impacts satisfaction ($\beta = 0.106$, $p < 0.01$); citizens with experience typically have more realistic expectations and know how to make the most of the services, consistent with the research by Alhawawsha and Anisimov (2019).

Overall, these research results provide deep and detailed insights into the factors affecting citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi. These results confirm findings from previous studies and emphasise the importance of improving procedures, information, and fees to enhance citizen satisfaction. Personal and social factors such as marital status and educational level are essential in developing and strengthening effective public service policies.

Table 5 Regression results of customer satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Satisfaction</i>		
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>
Procedures, information and fees	0.253** (0.10)	0.331*** (0.10)	0.296*** (0.10)
Staff	0.111* (0.06)	0.111* (0.06)	0.139** (0.06)
Facilities	0.0898* (0.05)	0.0502 (0.06)	0.0474 (0.06)
Gender: female (1) vs. male (0)		-0.0813 (0.05)	-0.0594 (0.05)
Age		-0.00337 (0.00)	-0.00206 (0.00)
Marriage: married (1) vs. single (0)		0.232*** (0.08)	0.236*** (0.08)
Education level: university/college (2) vs. high school (1)		0.168*** (0.06)	0.144** (0.06)
Education level: graduate (3) vs. high school (1)		0.271*** (0.08)	0.249*** (0.08)
Type of procedure: construction permit (1) vs. repair permit (0)		-0.0443 (0.05)	-0.0438 (0.05)
Type of procedure: other (2) than repair licensing (0)		-0.217** (0.09)	-0.217** (0.09)
Level of understanding		-0.175*** (0.04)	-0.189*** (0.04)
Experience in handling administrative procedures		0.0928*** (0.03)	0.106*** (0.03)
Region fixed effect	No	No	Yes
Observations	362	362	362
Adjusted R ²	0.030	0.164	0.183

Notes: Constants are not reported.

Standard errors in parentheses.

*p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01.

5 Discussion

The application of the SERVQUAL model in Hanoi's public administrative services presents a novel perspective, as previous studies have primarily focused on evaluating service quality in commercial sectors such as banking, healthcare, and education. Hanoi, as a rapidly urbanising city with significant bureaucratic structures, offers a unique case where public services are undergoing transformation through digitalisation and administrative reforms. Unlike other metropolitan areas, Hanoi's public administrative services face challenges in balancing traditional bureaucratic processes with modern

service expectations, making it a compelling setting to assess the adaptability of SERVQUAL.

First, the analysis shows that procedures, information, fees, and staff service quality significantly impact citizen satisfaction. Compared to previous studies, these results align with the research by Ryzin and Charbonneau (2010), which identifies procedural efficiency and information transparency as key determinants of citizen satisfaction. Similarly, Yang's (2018) research emphasises the role of administrative efficiency and service accessibility in shaping citizen perceptions of government services. Our study reaffirms these findings in the context of Hanoi, highlighting the need for continuous improvements in administrative procedures and transparency.

Secondly, the research results indicate that the facilities factor does not influence satisfaction. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by the Hanoi Department of Home Affairs (2022), which concludes that citizen satisfaction is primarily driven by staff transparency, service attitude, and work efficiency, rather than physical infrastructure. Comparisons with Ho Chi Minh City and South Korea suggest that citizens in more developed urban areas prioritise service efficiency and staff competence over physical service environments (Ho Chi Minh City Department of Home Affairs, 2022; Park and Kim, 2018). This highlights that future administrative reforms in Hanoi should focus more on service delivery optimisation rather than facility improvements.

Thirdly, citizens' satisfaction with these services is influenced by personal and social factors, including their educational level, marital status, and the procedures they undergo. Additionally, their level of understanding and experience influences their satisfaction. In Hanoi, a city with a diverse population and a high level of development, those above personal and social factors can substantially impact individuals' satisfaction. The level of access and demand for public services is also higher in Hanoi, the country's political, economic, and cultural centre. Administrative agencies must make the necessary adjustments and responses to accommodate population groups with varying expectations and requirements for public services, which personal and social factors can influence.

Furthermore, comparative insights from international studies strengthen the contextual relevance of our findings. For instance, in South Korea, e-government and digital transformation initiatives have significantly improved citizen satisfaction by reducing bureaucratic delays and increasing service accessibility (Park and Kim, 2018). Similarly, in Singapore, comprehensive staff training programs have enhanced service responsiveness, a key factor also identified in our study as essential for Hanoi (Alkrajji and Ameen, 2021). These international comparisons suggest that Hanoi can benefit from expanding digital administrative services and investing in workforce development programs to enhance service quality.

6 Conclusions

This study investigated the satisfaction of citizens with public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi's districts, a rapidly developing city facing numerous urban management challenges and opportunities. The findings from the study on citizen satisfaction in Hanoi can provide practical policy implications not only for local authorities but also broadly applicable in countries with similar conditions.

Firstly, local authorities should enhance the transparency and efficiency of administrative procedures in the construction sector. This can be achieved by streamlining processes, eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic complexity, and ensuring that information is easily accessible to the public. For example, Estonia's e-government system has successfully digitised construction permit applications, significantly reducing processing times and improving transparency. Implementing similar digital platforms in local governance can improve service delivery and citizen trust. Additionally, authorities should reassess administrative service fees, ensuring they are fair, clearly disclosed, and proportionate to service quality, thus preventing public dissatisfaction or confusion.

Secondly, investing in staff training and professional development is crucial to improving the quality of administrative services. Employees should receive regular training to enhance their knowledge and skills in handling applications and resolving citizen concerns efficiently. For instance, Singapore's Public Service Division has implemented comprehensive training programs focusing on digital literacy and customer service, enabling staff to offer more responsive and citizen-centric services. Encouraging an impartial and customer-friendly service culture can further enhance citizen satisfaction and trust in local governance.

Thirdly, local governments should adopt a strategic approach to public service enhancement by integrating citizen feedback into policymaking. Conducting regular surveys and public consultations, similar to the UK's Citizens' Panel initiative, can help authorities gauge satisfaction levels and identify key areas for improvement. By systematically analysing this data, policymakers can tailor services to better align with citizens' needs and expectations, ultimately fostering more effective and responsive public administration.

Implementing our recommendations faces several challenges. Bureaucratic resistance and limited digital literacy among public officials may hinder e-government adoption, requiring targeted training programs and gradual digital transitions. Financial constraints pose another hurdle, as significant investment in infrastructure and training is needed, making public-private partnerships and phased implementation viable solutions. Additionally, the digital divide remains a concern, particularly for elderly and low-income groups, necessitating hybrid service models to ensure accessibility for all citizens.

The findings of this study not only contribute to understanding citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in Hanoi but also offer valuable insights for developing and underdeveloped countries facing similar urban governance challenges. Many of these nations struggle with bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and limited citizen engagement in administrative processes. The results highlight the critical role of procedural simplification, service transparency, and staff competency in enhancing public satisfaction – factors that are universally relevant in improving governance quality.

By adopting digital public service platforms, streamlining administrative procedures, and enhancing service accessibility, policymakers in developing regions can mitigate bureaucratic bottlenecks and improve citizen trust. The lessons drawn from Hanoi's experience can serve as a reference for cities undergoing rapid urbanisation, where balancing efficiency and public satisfaction remains a key governance priority. Future research can further explore how these strategies can be tailored to specific national and institutional contexts to optimise their effectiveness.

While this study provides deep insights into citizen satisfaction with public administrative services in the construction sector in Hanoi, it has limitations. Firstly, choosing Hanoi may not accurately reflect the experiences and perceptions of citizens in other areas of Vietnam or countries with similar contexts. Satisfaction levels may vary significantly based on specific geographical and cultural factors. Secondly, limitations in the study sample may not accurately assess the views of all population groups. Finally, citizen feedback on satisfaction may be influenced by emotions and subjective perceptions at the time of the survey, which may not be measured accurately or consistently over time.

Future research should consider longitudinal studies to track changes in citizen satisfaction over time, assessing the impact of administrative reforms and digitalisation initiatives. Additionally, sectoral comparisons across services such as business licensing, social welfare, and healthcare administration would help identify sector-specific challenges and refine policy recommendations. Lastly, cross-country comparisons with other developing economies undergoing administrative reforms could offer valuable insights into best practices and common challenges in public service delivery.

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