

Governance through Digital Platforms: A Study of the Effectiveness of e-Participation on Policy Transparency in the Philippines

Josephine Tan¹, Christopher Lum¹

¹Department of Law and Technology, University of the Philippines, Philippines

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Corresponding Author:

Josephine Tan

Email:

josephinet@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates the effectiveness of e-participation in enhancing policy transparency in the Philippines. As digital platforms are increasingly used for public engagement in policy-making, the study seeks to evaluate how these platforms influence government transparency and citizen participation.

Subjects and Methods: The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design involving 320 respondents consisting of citizens, government officials, and civil society representatives who had experience using digital governance platforms. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression with SPSS version 27.

Results: The findings indicate that respondents generally perceived e-participation platforms positively, particularly regarding accessibility and digital literacy. Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between e-participation effectiveness and policy transparency. Regression analysis further demonstrated that institutional responsiveness was the strongest predictor of transparency outcomes. The results suggest that transparent digital governance depends not only on technological accessibility but also on responsive governmental institutions.

Conclusions: E-participation significantly strengthens policy transparency and democratic engagement in the Philippines when supported by inclusive digital infrastructure and responsive governance practices.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rise of digital technologies has significantly transformed governance practices around the world, particularly through the use of digital platforms for e-participation (Ragi et al., 2023; Chugunov et al., 2021). E-participation refers to the use of digital tools and platforms to involve citizens in the decision-making processes of public governance, allowing for greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in policy-making. The growing adoption of e-participation platforms in many countries has been seen as a way to enhance democratic processes, strengthen citizen engagement, and improve the overall transparency of governance (Mariani et al., 2024; Zheng, 2017).

These digital platforms enable governments to engage with citizens beyond traditional, face-to-face consultations, offering new channels for public participation in matters ranging from local governance to national policy-making (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016; Cochrane, 2015). The Philippines, like many other countries, has been at the forefront of adopting digital tools to facilitate citizen involvement in public policy (Moreno & Delos, 2024). The introduction of

various e-participation platforms, including online public forums, e-petitions, and virtual town halls, reflects a growing commitment to improving transparency in government.

As one of the most dynamic democracies in Southeast Asia, the Philippines has made substantial progress in promoting e-participation as a means of enhancing governance. Despite the optimism surrounding digital platforms, questions remain regarding their actual effectiveness in improving policy transparency and fostering meaningful citizen engagement (Asimakopoulos et al., 2025; Saner et al., 2020). Studies on e-participation highlight that while these platforms offer a high potential for democratizing access to policymaking, their impact is often uneven, with challenges relating to digital literacy, access to technology, and the ability of governments to implement feedback effectively.

According to Huffman (2017), the central issue of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of e-participation in improving policy transparency within the Philippine governance system. While digital platforms promise greater inclusivity and transparency, there is limited empirical evidence on whether these platforms are genuinely making government policies more transparent to the public or if they are merely symbolic gestures that fail to deliver meaningful change (Doshi & Schmidt, 2024). The study seeks to address this gap by investigating how e-participation platforms have been utilized in the Philippines and assessing their impact on the transparency of policy decision-making processes. In doing so, the study aims to identify the factors that contribute to the success or failure of these platforms in achieving their intended goals.

A common solution proposed to address the challenges of e-participation is the enhancement of digital infrastructure and the implementation of robust legal frameworks that ensure transparency and accountability in the use of these platforms (Ali, 2023; Gil et al., 2022). According to the literature, the success of e-participation is often contingent upon the government's ability to provide the necessary technological infrastructure, ensure digital inclusivity, and establish clear mechanisms for incorporating citizen feedback into policy decisions (Bertot et al., 2010).

Studies also emphasize the need for greater government commitment to not only providing platforms for participation but also using the input received from citizens to inform real policy change (Tambouris et al., 2017; Gil et al., 2022). These solutions focus on creating a more conducive environment for e-participation and addressing the barriers that may hinder its effectiveness, such as limited access to technology or a lack of trust in government institutions. In the case of the Philippines, the government has made notable strides in establishing digital platforms to facilitate e-participation. For instance, the *Open Data Philippines* initiative provides citizens with access to a wealth of government data, which is seen as an essential step toward improving transparency.

The Philippine government has implemented digital consultation processes through platforms such as *E-Participation for Local Government Units* (eLGUs), which allows citizens to engage with their local governments in policy discussions. These initiatives face various challenges, including limited digital literacy among the population, uneven access to technology, and concerns about the genuine integration of citizen feedback into policy decisions. Previous studies have highlighted the potential of these platforms to enhance governance, but the literature also points to the limitations of current practices in ensuring that e-participation leads to real improvements in policy transparency (Luna, 2020; Kassen, 2019).

This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital governance and e-participation by offering a critical analysis of the effectiveness of e-participation platforms in the Philippines. Specifically, it aims to assess how these platforms have been utilized to improve policy transparency, identify the barriers to their effectiveness, and propose recommendations for enhancing their impact. Through this research, the study will fill a critical gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence on the actual outcomes of e-participation in a Southeast Asian context, which has been relatively underexplored in previous studies.

The study will also examine the broader implications of e-participation on democratic governance in the Philippines and explore how these digital tools can be better leveraged to foster more inclusive and transparent policymaking. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the

Philippines as a case study, where e-participation is still in the developmental stages but shows considerable potential for reshaping governance practices. The hypothesis underpinning this study is that while e-participation platforms in the Philippines offer significant opportunities for enhancing transparency, their effectiveness is ultimately determined by the extent to which the government is willing and able to integrate public input into actual policy decisions.

This study will assess both the technical and institutional dimensions of e-participation, considering factors such as digital literacy, accessibility, government responsiveness, and the legal frameworks that support these platforms. The scope of the study will include a detailed examination of specific e-participation initiatives within the Philippines, focusing on the impact these platforms have had on transparency in public policy, and their broader implications for governance in Southeast Asia.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the effectiveness of e-participation in enhancing policy transparency in the Philippines. A cross-sectional survey approach was adopted to measure the relationship between citizen participation through digital platforms and perceptions of government transparency, responsiveness, and accountability. Quantitative research was considered appropriate because the study aimed to test empirical relationships among measurable variables and generate statistically verifiable findings regarding the influence of e-participation on governance outcomes. According to John W. Creswell, quantitative designs are suitable for studies that seek to explain causal relationships and evaluate patterns through numerical analysis. The study focused on three major dimensions derived from the literature on digital governance and e-participation: citizen engagement, policy transparency, and institutional responsiveness. These dimensions were operationalized into measurable indicators adapted from previous studies on digital governance and public participation (Bertot et al., 2010; Zheng, 2017; Kassen, 2019). The conceptual framework assumed that higher levels of e-participation would positively influence perceptions of transparency and public trust in policymaking processes. A correlational research design was utilized to identify the degree of association between the independent variable, namely e-participation effectiveness, and the dependent variable, namely policy transparency. The design also enabled the study to examine whether accessibility, digital literacy, and government responsiveness significantly affected the effectiveness of digital participation platforms. The use of a quantitative explanatory approach strengthened the objectivity of the study by reducing interpretative bias and allowing statistical validation of findings.

Research Setting and Context

The study was conducted in the Philippines, particularly focusing on urban and semi-urban local government units (LGUs) that actively implemented digital governance initiatives such as Open Data Philippines and E-Participation for Local Government Units (eLGUs). The Philippines was selected because it represents one of the most active adopters of e-governance initiatives in Southeast Asia, with increasing governmental investment in digital participation mechanisms to improve transparency and citizen engagement. The research context centered on government digital platforms designed to facilitate public consultation, online policy discussions, electronic petitions, and public access to governmental data. These initiatives emerged as part of broader governance reforms aimed at improving democratic participation and administrative transparency. Nevertheless, disparities in digital access, internet infrastructure, and technological literacy continue to influence the effectiveness of these platforms across different regions in the Philippines. The study specifically targeted respondents who had previous experience using digital governance platforms. The research setting included participants from metropolitan regions such as Manila and Cebu, as well as respondents from developing municipalities where e-governance systems had recently been introduced. This contextual variation enabled the study to capture differences in citizen experiences regarding accessibility, participation quality, and transparency outcomes.

Population and Sample

The target population of this study consisted of citizens, government employees, policy practitioners, and civil society actors who had interacted with government-sponsored digital participation platforms in the Philippines. The inclusion criteria required respondents to have used at least one e-participation platform within the previous two years. These platforms included online public consultations, digital complaint systems, e-petition mechanisms, and government transparency portals. A purposive sampling technique combined with stratified sampling was employed to ensure that respondents represented different demographic and institutional categories. Purposive sampling was used because the study required respondents with direct experience in e-participation activities. Stratified sampling ensured proportional representation based on region, occupation, age group, and educational background. This approach increased the representativeness of the sample and minimized sampling bias. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. A total of 320 respondents participated in the study, consisting of 220 citizens, 60 government officials, and 40 representatives from civil society organizations and academic institutions. The sample size was considered statistically adequate for regression and correlation analyses, as suggested by methodological standards in quantitative governance research.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Citizens	220	68.8%
Government Officials	60	18.7%
Civil Society/Academics	40	12.5%
Male	172	53.8%
Female	148	46.2%
Urban Respondents	210	65.6%
Semi-Urban Respondents	110	34.4%

The demographic distribution indicates that the study captured diverse perspectives regarding the implementation and effectiveness of e-participation systems in the Philippines.

Data Collection Techniques

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through online survey platforms and direct institutional coordination with local government offices and community organizations. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The instrument measured perceptions regarding accessibility of digital platforms, responsiveness of government institutions, effectiveness of citizen participation, transparency of policymaking processes, and trust in digital governance systems. The questionnaire items were adapted from validated instruments used in previous studies on e-governance and public participation (Evans & Campos, 2013; Fung et al., 2013; Zheng, 2017). The instrument consisted of four sections: respondent demographics, accessibility and digital literacy, e-participation effectiveness, and policy transparency outcomes. Before large-scale distribution, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing involving 30 respondents who shared similar characteristics with the target population. The pilot test aimed to evaluate clarity, consistency, and comprehensibility of the survey items. Feedback obtained during the pilot phase was used to revise ambiguous statements and improve the reliability of the instrument. Secondary data were also collected from government reports, policy documents, digital governance statistics, and institutional publications related to Open Data Philippines and eLGUs. These secondary sources provided contextual support and strengthened interpretation of the quantitative findings. Data collection was conducted over a three-month period between January and March 2025. Respondents completed the surveys voluntarily after receiving explanations regarding the objectives of the study and confidentiality protections.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics were first employed to summarize respondent demographics and

general trends in perceptions regarding e-participation effectiveness. Measures such as frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to interpret the overall distribution of responses. Inferential statistical techniques were subsequently applied to test the study hypotheses. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between e-participation effectiveness and policy transparency. Multiple linear regression analysis was further employed to identify the predictive influence of variables such as accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness on perceived transparency outcomes.

The regression model used in this study can be represented as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Y represents policy transparency;

X₁ represents accessibility of digital platforms;

X₂ represents digital literacy;

X₃ represents institutional responsiveness;

β₀ represents the constant;

β₁, β₂, β₃ represent regression coefficients; and

ε represents the error term

Hypothesis testing was conducted at a significance level of 0.05. The statistical analyses enabled the study to determine whether e-participation significantly influenced transparency in policymaking processes and whether supporting variables strengthened or weakened this relationship.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure instrument validity, the questionnaire underwent content validity assessment through expert review involving scholars in digital governance, public administration, and quantitative research methodology. The experts evaluated the relevance, clarity, and consistency of the survey items with the study objectives and conceptual framework. Construct validity was assessed using factor analysis to confirm whether questionnaire items adequately represented the intended dimensions of e-participation and transparency. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were employed to determine sampling adequacy and variable suitability for factor analysis. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The reliability values for all variable dimensions exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Specifically, the reliability coefficients for accessibility, citizen engagement, institutional responsiveness, and policy transparency ranged from 0.79 to 0.88, demonstrating strong reliability of the measurement instrument. Ethical considerations were also carefully observed throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed regarding the objectives of the study before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained to protect participant privacy. The study complied with institutional ethical standards for social science research involving human participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings regarding the effectiveness of e-participation in enhancing policy transparency in the Philippines. The analysis is organized systematically according to the quantitative framework established in the methodology section. The findings focus on respondent characteristics, descriptive statistical outcomes, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis examining the relationship between e-participation effectiveness and policy transparency. The results further evaluate the influence of accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness on citizens' perceptions of transparency within digital governance systems. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the overall distribution of responses, while inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression, were employed to test the relationships

among variables. The presentation of results follows the structure of the study objectives and analytical framework developed from the literature on digital governance and e-participation.

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 320 respondents from various institutional and social backgrounds across the Philippines. The demographic distribution demonstrates that the sample adequately represented citizens, government officials, and civil society actors who had experience using digital governance platforms.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	172	53.8%
	Female	148	46.2%
Occupation	Citizens	220	68.8%
	Government Officials	60	18.7%
	Civil Society/Academics	40	12.5%
Residence	Urban	210	65.6%
	Semi-Urban	110	34.4%
Age Group	18–30 Years	132	41.3%
	31–45 Years	104	32.5%
	Above 45 Years	84	26.2%

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The findings indicate that most respondents were citizens actively participating in digital governance platforms. Urban respondents constituted the majority of the sample, reflecting the higher concentration of internet access and digital infrastructure in metropolitan areas of the Philippines. Younger respondents between 18 and 30 years old represented the largest age category, suggesting that younger populations are more actively engaged in e-participation initiatives. The demographic profile also demonstrates that digital participation remains more prevalent among technologically active groups with higher internet accessibility. Nevertheless, the inclusion of semi-urban respondents enabled the study to capture variations in perceptions regarding accessibility and institutional responsiveness across different local contexts.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the overall perceptions of respondents regarding accessibility, digital literacy, institutional responsiveness, e-participation effectiveness, and policy transparency. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to determine the central tendency and variability of responses.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Accessibility of Digital Platforms	3.94	0.71
Digital Literacy	4.01	0.68
Institutional Responsiveness	3.62	0.74
E-Participation Effectiveness	3.87	0.69
Policy Transparency	3.79	0.72

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The descriptive statistical findings indicate that respondents generally held favorable perceptions regarding the implementation of e-participation and digital governance initiatives in the Philippines. The relatively high mean values across most variables suggest that digital participation platforms have become increasingly accessible and functional in supporting citizen engagement within governmental processes. Respondents demonstrated substantial confidence in their ability to utilize digital technologies, reflecting the growing integration of online systems into public governance and civic participation.

The findings also reveal that accessibility and digital literacy constitute important strengths within the current e-governance environment. Respondents perceived government digital platforms as sufficiently accessible and capable of facilitating public interaction with policy-related information and consultation mechanisms. These results imply that technological adoption among citizens has contributed positively to the expansion of participatory governance practices. Nevertheless, institutional responsiveness emerged as a comparatively weaker dimension within the overall assessment. Although digital participation opportunities are increasingly available, respondents expressed moderate confidence regarding the extent to which governmental institutions respond effectively to public feedback and incorporate citizen input into policymaking processes.

This suggests that the effectiveness of e-participation is influenced not only by technological infrastructure but also by the responsiveness and transparency of governmental institutions in managing public participation outcomes. The descriptive findings demonstrate that e-participation platforms have contributed positively to policy transparency and citizen engagement. The integration of digital governance mechanisms appears to support broader access to governmental information, strengthen public awareness of policy processes, and encourage more inclusive forms of civic participation in the Philippines.

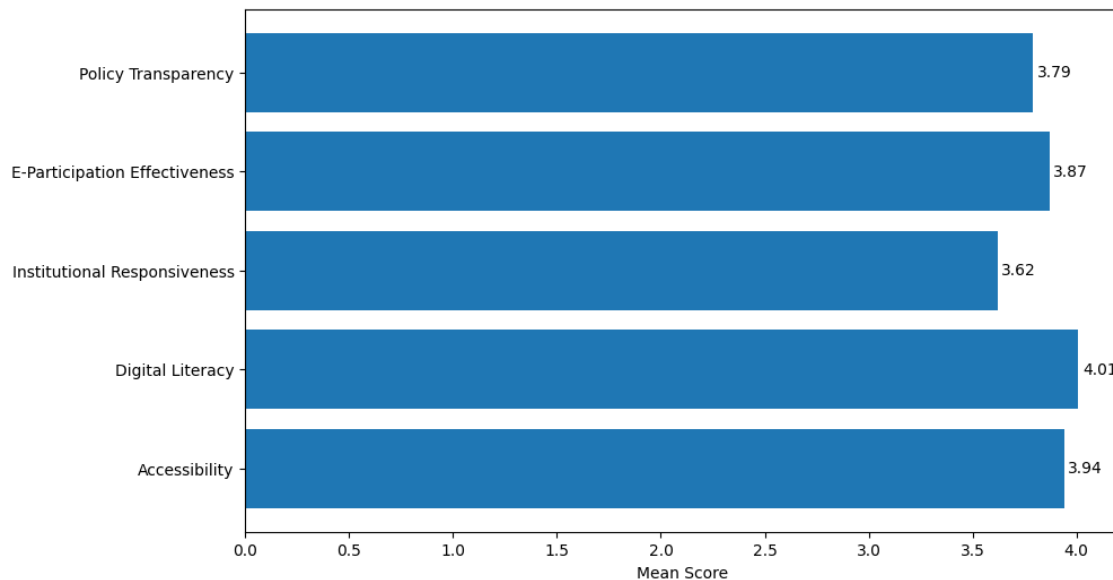


Figure 1. Mean Scores of Research Variables

The comparative distribution of the principal variables examined in the study concerning the implementation of e-participation and policy transparency in the Philippines. The findings indicate that respondents generally expressed positive perceptions toward digital governance platforms, particularly regarding digital literacy and accessibility of online participation systems. These results suggest that most participants were relatively familiar with the use of digital technologies in accessing government services and participating in policy-related activities. The figure also demonstrates that institutional responsiveness received comparatively lower evaluations than the other variables. This indicates that although digital participation mechanisms have become increasingly accessible, concerns remain regarding the extent to which government institutions respond effectively to public feedback and incorporate citizen input into policymaking processes. The visual distribution confirms that the effectiveness of e-participation is strongly influenced not only by technological accessibility but also by institutional commitment to transparent and responsive governance practices.

Accessibility of Digital Platforms

The first analytical dimension examined respondents' perceptions regarding accessibility to e-participation systems. Accessibility was measured through indicators related to internet availability, usability of digital platforms, affordability of internet services, and convenience of accessing government information online.

Table 4. Accessibility of E-Participation Platforms

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Ease of accessing government websites	4.03	High
Availability of online public consultation systems	3.95	High
Accessibility through mobile devices	4.08	High
Internet affordability for participation	3.71	Moderate
User-friendly digital interfaces	3.94	High

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The findings demonstrate that respondents generally considered e-participation platforms accessible and user-friendly. Mobile accessibility received the highest rating, indicating that smartphone-based participation significantly supports digital engagement in the Philippines. Internet affordability received a relatively lower score, reflecting ongoing inequalities in internet access and digital infrastructure, particularly in semi-urban areas. These findings suggest that technological accessibility remains a critical factor influencing participation rates in digital governance systems. Respondents from urban areas reported significantly higher accessibility scores compared to semi-urban respondents, indicating disparities in digital infrastructure development across regions.

Digital Literacy and Citizen Participation

Digital literacy was examined to determine whether citizens possessed sufficient technological competencies to participate effectively in online governance activities. The analysis included indicators related to technological skills, confidence in using digital systems, and ability to interpret governmental information.

Table 5. Digital Literacy among Respondents

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Ability to use online government services	4.06	High
Understanding digital participation procedures	3.98	High
Confidence in submitting online feedback	4.01	High
Ability to access policy-related information	4.02	High
Understanding transparency-related content	3.97	High

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The findings indicate that respondents generally possessed strong digital competencies necessary for participation in online governance systems. The ability to use online government services received the highest mean score, reflecting increased public familiarity with digital platforms. Despite these positive findings, several respondents from semi-urban regions reported difficulties in understanding technical procedures associated with certain digital platforms. This suggests that digital literacy disparities continue to affect the inclusiveness of e-participation systems in the Philippines.

Institutional Responsiveness

Institutional responsiveness was analyzed to evaluate whether government institutions effectively responded to citizen feedback submitted through digital platforms. This dimension measured responsiveness, policy feedback mechanisms, transparency of governmental decisions, and trust in institutional actions.

Table 6. Institutional Responsiveness to Public Participation

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Government response to online feedback	3.59	Moderate
Transparency of policy decision-making	3.76	High
Timeliness of institutional responses	3.51	Moderate
Public availability of policy updates	3.83	High
Government willingness to incorporate feedback	3.42	Moderate

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The results indicate that institutional responsiveness remains one of the weaker dimensions within Philippine e-participation systems. Although respondents acknowledged improvements in transparency and access to policy information, they expressed moderate confidence regarding the government’s willingness to incorporate citizen input into actual policy decisions.

The relatively lower score for governmental willingness to integrate feedback suggests that e-participation mechanisms are sometimes perceived as consultative rather than transformative. Respondents indicated that while digital platforms provide channels for expression, tangible policy changes resulting from citizen feedback remain limited.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between accessibility, digital literacy, institutional responsiveness, e-participation effectiveness, and policy transparency.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility	1				
Digital Literacy	0.642	1			
Institutional Responsiveness	0.587	0.603	1		
E-Participation Effectiveness	0.711	0.695	0.742	1	
Policy Transparency	0.674	0.659	0.768	0.804	1

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The findings demonstrate strong positive correlations among the major research variables. E-participation effectiveness exhibited a very strong correlation with policy transparency ($r = 0.804$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher perceptions of digital participation effectiveness were associated with greater perceptions of transparency in governance. Institutional responsiveness also showed a strong relationship with policy transparency ($r = 0.768$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that government responsiveness significantly influences citizens’ trust in transparent policymaking processes. Accessibility and digital literacy similarly demonstrated significant positive relationships with policy transparency, although their correlations were comparatively weaker than institutional responsiveness. These findings support the hypothesis that effective e-participation systems contribute positively to transparency in governance processes.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive influence of accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness on policy transparency.

The regression model applied in the study is represented as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where (Y) represents policy transparency, (X1) represents accessibility, (X2) represents digital literacy, and (X3) represents institutional responsiveness.

Table 8. Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value	Sig.
Accessibility	0.281	4.932	0.000
Digital Literacy	0.244	4.216	0.001
Institutional Responsiveness	0.438	7.154	0.000
Constant	1.203	3.081	0.002

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness influence policy transparency within the implementation of e-participation systems in the Philippines. The findings indicate that all independent variables exerted statistically significant positive effects on policy transparency, as

reflected by their significance values below the accepted threshold of 0.05. These results suggest that improvements in digital accessibility, technological competence, and governmental responsiveness contribute positively to citizens' perceptions of transparency in policymaking processes. Among the predictor variables, institutional responsiveness emerged as the strongest influencing factor. This finding indicates that the responsiveness of government institutions to citizen feedback plays a critical role in strengthening transparency and public trust in digital governance systems. Respondents perceived that transparency becomes more meaningful when government agencies actively acknowledge, process, and integrate public input into policy decisions.

Accessibility and digital literacy also demonstrated substantial contributions to policy transparency. The findings imply that accessible digital platforms and adequate technological competencies facilitate broader citizen participation and improve public access to governmental information. Citizens who possess stronger digital skills are more capable of engaging with online governance systems, interpreting policy information, and participating in digital consultation processes. The regression analysis confirms that the effectiveness of e-participation is multidimensional, involving both technological and institutional factors. The findings emphasize that successful digital governance requires not only accessible platforms and digitally literate citizens but also responsive institutions capable of transforming public participation into transparent policymaking practices.

Table 9. Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis on the Influence of E-Participation Variables toward Policy Transparency

Model Summary	Value
R	0.842
R ²	0.709
Adjusted R ²	0.703
F-value	128.442
Significance	0.000

Source: Processed Survey Data, 2025.

The regression results demonstrate that the overall model was statistically significant ($F = 128.442$, $p < 0.001$). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.703 indicates that approximately 70.3% of the variance in policy transparency was explained by accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness. Institutional responsiveness emerged as the strongest predictor of policy transparency ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that citizens' perceptions regarding governmental responsiveness significantly influence their perceptions of transparency in policymaking. Accessibility and digital literacy also demonstrated statistically significant positive effects on policy transparency.

The findings suggest that although technological accessibility and digital competencies are important, the effectiveness of e-participation ultimately depends on the willingness of institutions to respond meaningfully to public participation. The regression analysis confirms that digital governance systems become more effective when citizen engagement is accompanied by responsive and transparent institutional behavior.

Discussion

The Effectiveness of E-Participation in Enhancing Policy Transparency

The findings of this study demonstrate that e-participation platforms contribute positively to policy transparency in the Philippines. The descriptive statistical analysis revealed that respondents generally perceived digital governance systems as accessible, functional, and supportive of citizen engagement in governmental processes. High evaluations of accessibility and digital literacy indicate that the increasing integration of digital technologies into governance has strengthened public interaction with policy-related information and consultation mechanisms. These findings align with the argument proposed by Bertot (2019) and colleagues that digital technologies can promote transparency by expanding public access to governmental information and facilitating participatory governance processes.

The positive relationship between e-participation effectiveness and policy transparency identified through the Pearson correlation analysis confirms that digital participation mechanisms significantly influence public perceptions of transparent governance (Waheduzzaman & Khandaker, 2022; Abdulkareem et al., 2022; Sadat, 2025). The strong correlation coefficient indicates that respondents who perceived digital participation systems as effective also tended to perceive policymaking processes as more transparent and accountable. This finding supports previous studies emphasizing that e-participation improves openness by enabling citizens to monitor governmental activities, access public information, and engage in policy discussions through digital platforms.

The results also suggest that digital governance initiatives in the Philippines have contributed to reducing administrative barriers traditionally associated with public participation. The implementation of platforms such as Open Data Philippines and eLGUs appears to have expanded opportunities for citizens to communicate with governmental institutions more efficiently. Respondents reported that online participation systems improved convenience in accessing public services and increased awareness regarding governmental decision-making processes (Kim & Lee, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2019; Widiatmoko et al., 2023). These findings are consistent with the perspective of Archon Fung, who argues that transparency becomes more meaningful when governments create institutional mechanisms that facilitate citizen access to information and participation in policymaking.

Despite these positive developments, the findings indicate that transparency outcomes remain uneven across different dimensions of e-participation. Firtin et al. (2025), Mulenga & Mwenya (2024) and Mao et al. (2025) said that, Institutional responsiveness received comparatively lower evaluations than accessibility and digital literacy, suggesting that technological availability alone does not guarantee meaningful participation. Respondents expressed concerns regarding the extent to which governmental institutions genuinely integrate citizen feedback into policy decisions. This finding reflects the distinction between symbolic participation and substantive participation frequently discussed in digital governance literature. In many cases, governments may provide digital consultation channels without fully incorporating public input into actual policymaking processes.

The findings further reveal that disparities in digital infrastructure continue to influence the inclusiveness of e-participation systems in the Philippines (Lagura, 2025). Respondents from urban areas reported higher levels of accessibility and digital engagement compared to participants from semi-urban regions. These differences indicate that digital divides remain an important challenge within the implementation of e-governance initiatives. Limited internet affordability and unequal technological infrastructure may reduce participation opportunities among marginalized communities, thereby affecting the democratic inclusiveness of digital governance systems. This observation supports previous studies arguing that digital governance effectiveness is strongly influenced by infrastructural equality and technological accessibility.

The strong explanatory capacity of the regression model also demonstrates that e-participation constitutes an important mechanism for strengthening transparency within public governance (Waheduzzaman, 2024; Bisogno et al., 2022). The model explained a substantial proportion of variance in policy transparency, indicating that accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness collectively shape citizens' perceptions of transparent governance. These findings reinforce the argument that digital participation systems can contribute significantly to democratic governance when technological and institutional conditions are adequately developed.

The Influence of Accessibility, Digital Literacy, and Institutional Responsiveness on Policy Transparency

The regression analysis demonstrated that accessibility, digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness significantly influence policy transparency in the Philippines. Each independent variable exerted a positive and statistically significant effect on transparency outcomes, indicating that the effectiveness of e-participation depends on the interaction between technological accessibility and institutional performance.

Accessibility emerged as an important determinant of effective e-participation. Respondents perceived that user-friendly digital platforms, mobile accessibility, and online consultation systems facilitated greater citizen involvement in governance processes. The widespread use of smartphones and internet-based communication technologies appears to support the expansion of participatory governance practices in the Philippines. Accessible digital systems reduce physical and administrative barriers to participation, allowing citizens to engage with governmental institutions more efficiently (Oliveira & Garcia, 2019; Balaji, 2025; Townley & Koop, 2024; Schedler et al., 2019). These findings correspond with studies suggesting that accessibility constitutes a foundational component of digital democracy because participation cannot occur effectively without adequate technological access.

The study also found that digital literacy significantly influences citizens' ability to participate meaningfully in e-governance systems. Respondents with stronger digital competencies demonstrated greater confidence in accessing policy information, using online consultation systems, and submitting feedback through digital platforms. This finding indicates that technological competence enhances the quality of public participation by enabling citizens to interpret governmental information critically and engage more actively in policy discussions. The results support the argument that digital literacy functions not only as a technical skill but also as a democratic resource that shapes citizens' capacity to participate in governance processes.

Nevertheless, the analysis suggests that digital literacy disparities remain evident among respondents from semi-urban regions. Some participants reported difficulties in understanding digital participation procedures and navigating governmental platforms. These findings indicate that improvements in technological infrastructure should be accompanied by digital education initiatives to ensure more inclusive participation. Without sufficient digital competencies, certain population groups may remain excluded from digital governance processes despite the availability of online participation systems.

Institutional responsiveness emerged as the strongest predictor of policy transparency within the regression model. This finding demonstrates that citizens place substantial importance on governmental responsiveness when evaluating the effectiveness of e-participation systems. Respondents perceived transparency more positively when governmental institutions acknowledged public feedback, provided policy updates, and demonstrated willingness to incorporate citizen input into decision-making processes. The findings suggest that transparency is not solely determined by the availability of information but also by the extent to which governments engage interactively with citizens through digital platforms.

The comparatively lower evaluations of institutional responsiveness indicate persistent concerns regarding governmental accountability within digital participation systems. Respondents expressed moderate confidence regarding whether online consultations produce tangible policy changes. This finding reflects broader debates within digital governance scholarship concerning the gap between participation opportunities and actual policy influence. Governments may establish digital participation mechanisms primarily for administrative legitimacy without substantially transforming policymaking practices (Ramjit, 2025; Braams et al., 2021; Coelho et al., 2022). As a result, citizens may perceive participation platforms as procedural rather than transformative.

The strong influence of institutional responsiveness highlights the importance of integrating citizen participation into formal governance structures. Effective e-participation requires governments not only to provide digital platforms but also to demonstrate transparency in how citizen input is processed and utilized within policymaking. Public trust in digital governance systems increases when participation outcomes are visible, measurable, and reflected in governmental actions. These findings indicate that responsive institutions constitute a central condition for the successful implementation of digital democracy initiatives.

The study also demonstrates that technological and institutional dimensions of e-participation are mutually reinforcing. Accessibility and digital literacy enhance opportunities for participation, while institutional responsiveness determines whether participation produces meaningful governance outcomes. The interaction among these dimensions explains why some

digital governance initiatives succeed in strengthening transparency while others remain limited in their practical impact. Effective e-participation therefore requires a balanced combination of technological accessibility, citizen competence, and institutional commitment to participatory governance practices.

CONCLUSION

E-participation significantly contributes to enhancing policy transparency in the Philippines through the integration of accessible digital platforms, improved digital literacy, and institutional responsiveness. The quantitative analysis confirmed that citizens generally perceive digital governance initiatives positively, particularly regarding accessibility to online participation systems and the ability to engage with governmental information through digital technologies. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses further revealed that e-participation effectiveness has a strong positive relationship with policy transparency, with institutional responsiveness emerging as the most influential predictor. These results indicate that transparent governance is not determined solely by technological infrastructure, but also by the willingness of governmental institutions to respond to public input and incorporate citizen participation into policymaking processes. The study also identified continuing challenges related to digital inequality, internet affordability, and uneven institutional responsiveness, particularly in semi-urban regions. The discussion emphasizes that effective digital governance requires a balanced interaction between technological accessibility, citizen competence, and accountable institutional behavior. The study therefore concludes that e-participation platforms possess substantial potential to strengthen democratic governance and public trust when supported by inclusive digital infrastructure and responsive policymaking mechanisms in the Philippines.

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