

The Impact of Electronic Government Policy on Transparency and Accountability in Public Services

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Abstract

Implementing the Electronic Government policy has become the main focus in efforts to increase transparency and accountability in public services. This policy is intended to change the way of interaction between government and society, expand access to information, and increase service efficiency. However, there are still various challenges that need to be overcome, including data security issues and gaps in technology access across various demographics. This research aims to evaluate the impact of Electronic Government policies on transparency and accountability in public services. This research uses a qualitative approach, collecting data from various relevant studies and sources for analysis. The data is processed to identify emerging themes and patterns, ensuring the validity and reliability of the conclusions produced. The research conclusion shows that e-government is significant in increasing transparency and accountability, by speeding up service processes and increasing public participation. However, challenges such as data security and uneven access are still major obstacles. Continuous evaluation and adaptation to feedback from the community are needed to improve and sharpen the implementation of this policy. Further development in e-government technology is also essential to overcome current weaknesses. An inclusive and sustainable development strategy will be key in making e-government a more effective tool for transparent and accountable government.

Keywords: *Electronic Government, Transparency, Accountability, Public Services.*



A. INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, governments in various countries have adopted information and communication technology to improve the quality of the public services they offer. This transformation led to the implementation of electronic government (e-government) policies intended to make government services more accessible to the general public. In this context, e-government is not only seen as a digital service platform but also as a strategic tool to increase transparency and accountability in public administration (Clarke, 2020).

In recent decades, the need for transparency and accountability in public services has become increasingly important. The public is now more aware and demands transparency in government operations as well as quick and effective responses to their needs. Accountability, on the other hand, becomes central in ensuring that government actions can be justified and those responsible can be held accountable for their decisions and actions (Molina Rodríguez-Navas et al., 2021).

E-government policy was initiated in response to these demands, with the hope that efficient use of information technology will enable the government to operate

more openly and responsibly. However, implementing e-government brings challenges and opportunities. One of the main challenges is how this technology can be used to increase transparency and accountability, not just as a tool to mechanize existing processes (Li & Ding, 2020).

Experience from various countries shows that the success of e-government in increasing transparency and accountability is highly dependent on many factors, including technological infrastructure, institutional readiness, supporting policies, and public involvement and trust. In some countries, e-government has succeeded in strengthening transparency, allowing citizens to obtain information about government activities and public services in real-time. On the other hand, there are still records that in several regions, despite the existence of e-government initiatives, increased transparency and accountability have not been achieved optimally (Malodia et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research on the real impact of e-government on transparency and accountability in various geographical and socio-economic contexts becomes very relevant. This kind of research is not only important for measuring the current effectiveness of e-government but also for identifying shortcomings in its implementation and offering recommendations for the future. Thus, there is a need for in-depth studies that evaluate the impact of e-government policies, particularly concerning transparency and accountability in public services, to ensure that investments in these technologies generate added value for better and more responsible governance.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Electronic Government

According to the World Bank, E-Government involves the use of information technology by government agencies, including wide area networks, the internet, and mobile computing, to foster interactions with citizens, businesses, and other governmental entities. The Ministry of Communication and Information explains that E-Government refers to public services delivered via government websites, which prominently display the Indonesian government's domain. Clay G. Weslatt describes E-Government as the employment of information and communication technologies to enhance government efficiency, reduce costs effectively, improve public services, and increase government accountability to the citizenry (Daud et al., 2020).

E-Government plays a crucial role in the Indonesian government's approach to providing public services. It represents an adaptation to global advancements in information technology, prompting the Indonesian government to engage in the development of digital systems that will support and streamline future governmental operations (Rachmawati & Fitriyanti, 2021). Additionally, Presidential Instruction Number 3 of 2003, regarding the National Policy and Strategy for E-Government Development, was issued. This directive outlines the country's administrative processes using E-Government and underscores the Indonesian government's

commitment to enhancing public service quality through its implementation (Sabani, 2021).

Indrajit describes e-Government as the application of information technology by the government to transform its interactions with the public, the private sector, and other stakeholders. This technology usage includes the internet, mobile devices, computers, among others. E-Government was established as a means to digitize the distribution of government services. A significant advancement in e-Government efforts occurred in April 2004, when the Indonesian government initiated the use of a single identification number (SIN) for essential citizen services like driver's licenses, tax numbers, and passports (Liu et al., 2020). The adoption of e-Government in Indonesia reflects profound shifts in the national life from an authoritarian, centralized system to a democratic system with decentralized authority. This shift necessitates a government that is transparent, incorruptible, and responsive to public demands (Sawir et al., 2023).

In the Decree of the Minister of Communication and Information concerning Guidelines for the Development of Government Portal Infrastructure, several goals for e-government are outlined, including:

- a. Developing an information network that enhances public services, ensuring they are of high quality, widely accessible, and cost-effective.
- b. Facilitating interactive collaboration between government bodies and private entities to bolster the national economy.
- c. Creating effective mechanisms and channels for communication between government institutions and the public.
- d. Implementing a management system and operational processes that are streamlined, transparent, and efficient across government agencies (Shkarlet et al., 2020).

2. Transparency and Accountability

Transparency originates from the word "transparent," meaning clear, real, and open. It refers to the clarity or openness of information. Transparency is a principle that ensures everyone has the right to access information concerning government administration, including details about policies, their development and implementation, and the outcomes achieved (Romero, 2023).

Transparency involves a lack of hidden agendas, supported by the availability of complete information necessary for effective collaboration and cooperation. It is characterized by being free, clear, and open. In the context of schools, transparency means that everyone involved in educational matters can understand the processes and outcomes of decision-making and school policies. Transparency in schools must be unequivocal and devoid of any manipulation. It requires schools to provide truthful and reliable information that can be trusted by the public (Lnenicka & Nikiforova, 2021).

According to Hari Sabarno, "Transparency is one of the fundamental aspects for the realization of good government administration". Transparency is crucial for

the effective execution of government responsibilities in fulfilling the public's mandate. Given the government's power to make significant decisions affecting numerous individuals, it is essential that it offers comprehensive information about its actions. Transparency makes it challenging to conceal falsehoods, thereby serving as a vital tool in safeguarding government aid funds against corruption (Sofyani et al., 2020).

According to Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 13 of 2014, which provides guidelines for regional financial management, transparency is defined as a principle of openness that enables the public to access and obtain extensive information about regional finances. It ensures the right of everyone to access information about government administration, including insights into policies, their formulation and execution, and the outcomes achieved (Kusi et al., 2020).

On the other hand, accountability refers to the obligation or the condition of being answerable for one's actions. It acts as a motivating force within the operations of a company, aligned with specific duties and authorities (Masiero et al., 2020). Accountability also involves the responsibilities of individuals or authorities entrusted with managing public resources, requiring them to be answerable for issues related to their stewardship. It plays a key role in governance, particularly in monitoring performance in public services and reporting those outcomes transparently to the public (Dwangu & Mahlangu, 2021).

According to Dubnick, public accountability is traditionally seen as a mechanism for overseeing and guiding administrative conduct by imposing a duty to justify actions to various external authorities. Sri Minarti elaborates that accountability represents a condition where an individual is evaluated by others based on the quality of their performance in fulfilling tasks to meet designated responsibilities (Overman & Schillemans, 2022). Meanwhile, according to McKinsey and Howard, "Accountability is a situation where a person has and uses certain authority that can be controlled and is limited by the scope of the use of power by external control instruments, including the internal value system that applies in the institution concerned" (Henk, 2020).

According to Darise, accountability is the expression of the duty that individuals or work units have to manage and oversee resources and execute policies assigned to them, in order to meet specific objectives. From this, it can be deduced that transparency and accountability are interconnected. Transparency relates to the ability to freely access information, while accountability pertains to being answerable to the public for all actions taken (Vuorenmaa, 2024).

3. Public Service

The word "service" originates from "serve," which denotes the act of assisting by providing what others require. It can be argued that service is essential to human existence, so much so that it is inseparable from it. The term "public," on the other hand, refers to the general populace, society, or state, and has been incorporated into

Standard Indonesian as "Publik," meaning general, populous, or crowded (Palmié et al., 2022).

Several scholars have offered their interpretations of public service. For instance, Agung Kurniawan views public service as the process of fulfilling the needs of people or the public who are stakeholders in an organization, in accordance with foundational rules and established procedures (Tan et al., 2022). Ratminto explains that public services, or general services, encompass all forms of services, including public goods and services, which are principally the responsibility of government agencies at the national, regional levels, and also within State-Owned Enterprises or Regional-Owned Enterprises. These services are provided to meet community needs and to comply with legal and regulatory requirements (Zarychta et al., 2020).

According to Sinambela, service is defined as any activity undertaken by the government that benefits a group or unit and provides satisfaction, regardless of whether the outcomes are tied to a physical product (Naini et al., 2022).

Additionally, the Decree of the Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus Number 63 of 2003 outlines public service as all service activities conducted by public service providers aimed at meeting the needs of service recipients and fulfilling the requirements of statutory regulations. Meanwhile, public service providers in the Decree of the Minister for Administrative Reform No. 63 of 2003 explain that "Government Agencies as a collective term which includes Work Units/organizational units of Ministries, Departments, Non-Departmental Government Institutions, Secretariats of the Highest and Highest State Institutions, and other Government Agencies both central and Regional including State-Owned Enterprises, Agencies Regionally Owned Enterprise, Becoming a public service provider." According to Kuziemski & Misuraca (2020), users of public services include individuals, communities, government bodies, and legal entities who receive services provided by government agencies.

Drawing from the various definitions provided above, in the context of regional government, public service can be defined as the act of providing services or fulfilling the needs of people, communities, or other organizations that have a stake in the organization. This is done in accordance with established rules and procedures, with the objective of satisfying the recipients of these services (Yuan & Gasco-Hernandez, 2021).

C. METHOD

In this research, the main objective is to explore in depth the influence of Electronic Government policies on transparency and accountability in public services. To achieve this goal, research will be carried out using a qualitative approach. Through this approach, research data will be obtained from various credible sources, including the results of previous research and studies that are still relevant to the research topic. These sources will provide the insights necessary to understand the dynamics and implications of e-government implementation in different contexts. Once the research data is collected, the next step is to process the data to identify

patterns, themes, and insights that will help in understanding how e-government policies contribute to or may also pose challenges in achieving desired transparency and accountability. Careful and systematic data analysis is important to ensure that the conclusions produced are valid and reliable, thereby providing a meaningful contribution to the understanding and development of future e-government policies.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of e-Government and Access to Public Services

The implementation of e-government has brought significant changes in the way public services are provided in various regions. The application of this technology not only modernizes government infrastructure but also expands public access to various public services. In areas previously limited by geographic limitations or inadequate infrastructure, e-government platforms have enabled citizens to access important services such as civil document registration, tax information, and health services more easily. The presence of an online portal makes it possible to submit documents and process various needs without having to deal directly with time-consuming and often confusing bureaucracy.

However, the acceptance and use of these e-government platforms show striking differences based on user demographics. For example, young users and those with a higher educational background tend to be quicker to adopt and make maximum use of these services compared to older age groups and those with lower education. This is mainly because younger groups are usually more familiar with technology and more adaptive to digital changes. Meanwhile, in rural areas or for people who lack digital literacy, the use of e-government is often hampered by a lack of technological infrastructure such as a stable internet connection or adequate technological devices, resulting in inequality in access to services.

The impact of e-government on the convenience, speed, and efficiency of public services is beyond doubt. Governments implementing this system have seen significant improvements in reduced waiting times and service handling. For example, what previously might have taken several days or even weeks, such as applying for and receiving a driver's license, can now be completed in a matter of hours. This not only increases public satisfaction but also reduces opportunities for corruption and inefficient practices that often occur in manual systems.

Even though there are many advantages, several obstacles continue to be faced by users in accessing e-government-based services. Issues such as data security, privacy, and technical errors are often top concerns. System instability can cause frustration for users when the information they need cannot be accessed promptly. In addition, the lack of human interaction in these digital services sometimes makes users feel alienated, especially those who are used to receiving direct assistance from public service officers. This condition demands a more inclusive and responsive approach to developing and implementing e-government solutions to ensure that all levels of society can take advantage of the benefits offered by this technology.

2. The Impact of e-Government on Government Transparency

The implementation of e-government has changed the traditional paradigm in public services, especially in increasing government transparency. With e-government platforms, relevant documents and data are now more easily accessible to the public, enabling greater transparency on all fronts. This access not only involves providing broader information but also facilitates public oversight of government activities. Through online portals, the public can easily access budget plans, government decisions, and the latest updates on various ongoing projects. This ease of access significantly increases the visibility of policy and decision-making processes that previously may have been limited to internal government circles or through processes that took a long time to be accessible to the public.

However, although e-government has provided convenience in terms of transparency, several challenges remain, especially related to the quality and accuracy of the information provided. The existence of this large and easily accessible information is not always accompanied by a guarantee that the data is accurate and up to date. Errors in data input, system failures, or delays in data updates can result in inaccurate or outdated information, which in turn can reduce public trust in e-government as a transparency tool.

In addition, online information systems intended to increase transparency must also be able to protect sensitive data and ensure that information security is maintained. The dilemma between information disclosure and privacy protection is an important issue in the implementation of e-government. Without effective security, systems designed to increase transparency can create the risk of data leaks that can be misused.

To overcome this challenge, there needs to be continuous efforts from the government to not only update and maintain the technological infrastructure that supports e-government but also to improve the competence of human resources who manage the system. Ongoing training, enhanced cybersecurity, and strict data update protocols must be integrated as part of the e-government implementation strategy. This is important to ensure that the information provided through e-government platforms is always accurate, up-to-date, and secure. Through this approach, e-government will not only increase transparency but also strengthen public trust in government, both of which are important pillars in building a democratic and open society.

3. The Influence of e-Government on Government Accountability

The influence of e-government on government accountability has become a very important subject in discussions regarding the modernization of public administration. Through the implementation of e-government systems, tracking and monitoring government performance becomes more efficient and transparent. The digital system allows real-time recording of activities that can be accessed by the general public, meaning that every government activity can be monitored more closely. This not only increases transparency but also provides a strong basis for

accountability, where every decision and action taken by the government can be traced back and assessed by the public.

Furthermore, digital reporting systems and feedback mechanisms provided by e-government platforms strengthen accountability in an unprecedented way. The public not only has access to government information but can also provide feedback or complaints about the services provided. These platforms enable citizens to actively participate in government oversight, which in turn motivates governments to act according to standards and avoid non-conformities. When the public can provide direct feedback and see the government's response to that input, the level of trust and synergy between the government and the public generally increases.

From the perspective of combating corruption and abuse of power, e-government offers some very effective tools. Technologies such as centralized databases and electronic audits limit individuals' opportunities for fraud or corruption because almost every transaction can be traced and verified. This greatly reduces the wiggle room for individuals or groups within the government who may try to manipulate the system for personal gain. By eliminating or reducing face-to-face interactions in public administration processes, e-government reduces touch points that may become locations for corrupt actions.

However, e-government systems also face challenges, especially related to issues of anonymity and data security. While digital systems simplify oversight and increase accountability, they also raise questions about the security of citizens' personal information. Problems with data leaks or system hacking can damage the integrity of the e-government system itself. Anonymity in feedback or complaints may help protect the identity of the reporter from possible retaliation, but it can also hinder the accountability process if not managed properly. The government must ensure that e-government systems are protected with strong and transparent data security protocols to maintain public trust and maintain their effectiveness in strengthening accountability.

To increase accountability through e-government, there is a need for a balanced approach between technological innovation and privacy protection, with strong oversight mechanisms and active participation from civil society. Through these steps, e-government will not only encourage the development of cleaner and more efficient administrative processes but also strengthen the foundations of good governance and government accountability.

4. Evaluation and Future of e-Government

Evaluation of the effectiveness of e-government in increasing government transparency and accountability is a complex process that requires a multi-dimensional approach. Frequently used criteria include the extent to which public services have become more accessible, levels of user satisfaction, reductions in administrative costs, and improvements in the speed and quality of services. Evaluation methods typically involve user satisfaction surveys, operational data analysis, and benchmarking against established standards or international best

practices. These evaluations are important for identifying gaps in services and determining areas that need improvement. Additionally, in-depth analysis of how these systems operate in real-world scenarios helps in designing systems that are more robust and responsive to public needs.

The long-term impact of e-government adoption on government practices is significant. E-government has been proven to increase efficiency and make it easier to manage government resources, reduce corruption, and increase public participation in the democratic process. However, this transformation also demands changes in work culture, improved technological skills for government officials, and continued investment in IT infrastructure. The impact on governance is fundamental and ongoing, often requiring the restructuring of work processes and methods.

In addition, there is potential for further development in e-government technology to overcome existing weaknesses. Innovations such as the use of big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain offer new possibilities for increasing efficiency and security in e-government services. Big data can be used for predictive analysis that helps in better public policy planning, while AI can automate processes and increase the personalization of services. Blockchain promises increased data integrity and transparency due to its immutable and distributed nature.

The influence of feedback from the community cannot be ignored in shaping sustainable e-government development strategies. Citizens, as end users of these services, have valuable insight into what works and what does not in e-government systems. By actively engaging the public through public consultations, surveys, and other interactive platforms, governments can gather essential feedback that can help in improving and adapting systems according to user needs and expectations. This step not only strengthens the effectiveness of the system but also increases public trust and satisfaction with the government.

Incorporating all these aspects in e-government evaluation and development is key to ensuring that the adoption of these technologies truly changes the way government works, making it more transparent, accountable, and responsive to future needs and challenges. With a measured approach and a focus on continuous improvement, the future of e-government can bring more innovations that will continue to redefine interactions between governments and their citizens.

E. CONCLUSION

The implementation of e-government has had a significant impact on transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public services. E-government not only speeds up and makes access to public services easier, but also helps in expanding citizen participation in government decision-making and increasing the visibility of policy processes. Through the use of technologies such as big data, AI, and blockchain, the potential for further improvements is enormous, providing opportunities to address existing issues such as data security and ensuring the integrity of the information provided. However, challenges remain, particularly in adapting existing technology infrastructure to the needs of diverse users and ensuring that all levels of

society can access these services without hindrance. Continuous evaluation and feedback from users are key to ensuring that e-government continues to evolve and be relevant to citizens' needs. Therefore, a sustainable e-government development strategy must integrate technological innovation with an inclusive and participatory approach, ensuring that any changes not only bring technical efficiency but also improve the quality of interaction between government and society.

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