

Participatory Governance Strategy in Strengthening the Performance Transparency of Modern Bureaucracy

I Wayan Gede Suacana^{1*}, Bernadetta Tjandra Wulandari², Hasnawati³

¹Universitas Warmadewa, Indonesia

²Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya, Indonesia

³Universitas Cahaya Prima, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: I Wayan Gede Suacana, suacana@warmadewa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Modern bureaucratic reform demands strengthening performance transparency as a prerequisite for public accountability, but participatory governance practices at the local government level still face structural and cultural challenges that affect the effectiveness of information disclosure. This research aims to analyze participatory governance strategies in strengthening the transparency of modern bureaucratic performance and identify implementing mechanisms that support public accountability. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design in one of the local governments in Papua Province. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 10 key informants consisting of bureaucratic elements and community representatives, complemented by analysis of performance documents and limited observations. Data analysis is carried out interactively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing using source triangulation techniques. The results of the study show that an effective participatory governance strategy is supported by the integration of public consultation forums, optimization of digital-based performance information systems, and strengthening the role of external supervisors in the policy evaluation process. Deliberative participation has been shown to improve information accessibility, clarify performance indicators, and strengthen social surveillance mechanisms.

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reforms in the last two decades have placed performance transparency as the main foundation of modern governance. Globally, the open government and public accountability agenda is growing rapidly in line with public demands for information disclosure and the integrity of state institutions. Recent studies show that transparency based on public participation contributes significantly to improving the quality of services and public trust in the government (Asimakopoulos et al., 2025). In addition, a collaborative approach in public governance is considered to be able to strengthen policy legitimacy through the involvement of non-state actors in the decision-making process (Marquardt & Bäckstrand, 2022). In this context, the modern bureaucracy is required to be not only administratively responsive, but also open and accountable in performance management.

At the national and local levels, the challenge of performance transparency is still colored by structural problems, such as weak integration of information systems and limited public participation in policy evaluation. In some local governments, public participation is often procedural and not fully deliberative. Sasa's research (2022) confirms that participatory governance practices in developing countries still face hierarchical organizational and coordination barriers (Palumbo, 2023). Meanwhile, a study by Burcea (2022) shows that bureaucratic digitalization has not automatically increased transparency if it is not accompanied by effective social control mechanisms. This condition shows the urgency of a more in-depth analysis of the participatory governance implementation strategy in strengthening the transparency of modern bureaucratic performance.

Theoretically, the concept of participatory governance is rooted in the collaborative governance paradigm that emphasizes deliberative interaction between the government and stakeholders (Moussa et al., 2026). However, a number of empirical studies still focus on the normative aspects of participation without comprehensively examining the relationship between the bureaucratic performance measurement and reporting system. Research by Nederhand & Edelenbos (2023) found that public participation is often positioned as an instrument of legitimacy, rather than as a substantive mechanism of performance monitoring. On the other hand, performance transparency studies tend to focus on the technology and open data dimensions without integrating a participatory perspective in its entirety (Schwoerer, 2022). This gap shows the need for research that links participatory governance strategies with systemic performance transparency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of local government in Papua Province, the dynamics of decentralization and the characteristics of the archipelago present its own challenges in the implementation of modern governance. The implementation of a digital-based performance information system has not been fully integrated with an effective public participation mechanism. Study by Mappisabbi & Yappi (2024) emphasizing the importance of alignment between bureaucratic

innovation and local institutional capacity in strengthening transparency. In addition, community participation in areas with diverse socio-cultural characteristics requires a contextual deliberative approach so as not to stop at administrative formalities. Therefore, the analysis of participatory governance strategies in the regional context is relevant to answer the need for participation-based bureaucratic reform.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze in depth participatory governance strategies in strengthening the transparency of modern bureaucratic performance and identify implementing mechanisms that support public accountability. This study explicitly examines the interaction between participatory forums, performance information systems, and the role of external supervisors in shaping effective transparency practices. With a qualitative approach of case studies, this study is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of actors, processes, and policy instruments involved in strengthening performance transparency.

The contribution of this research is theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study expands the study of collaborative governance by integrating the dimension of performance transparency in the context of modern regional bureaucracy. This research also offers a conceptual model that links deliberative participation with a digital-based performance reporting system. Practically, the findings of this study can be a reference for local governments in designing participatory strategies that are more substantive and oriented towards public accountability. Thus, this research contributes to the development of public administration science while supporting the implementation of bureaucratic reform that is more inclusive and transparent.

METHODOLOGY

Design and Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to analyze in depth participatory governance strategies in strengthening the transparency of modern bureaucratic performance. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows contextual exploration of the dynamics of actors, policy processes, and institutional mechanisms that cannot be quantitatively measured. The case study design was used to comprehensively understand the phenomenon in the real context of local government in Papua Province. This approach is relevant for public governance research that emphasizes process analysis, social interaction, and policy implementation strategies (Viera, 2023). Thus, this research is oriented towards an in-depth understanding of the practice of participation and transparency in modern bureaucracy.

Population and Informant Recruitment Techniques

The research population includes bureaucratic actors and external stakeholders involved in the planning, reporting, and performance evaluation process of local governments. The informant recruitment technique uses non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method, because this study requires informants who have direct knowledge and experience related to

participatory governance (Mamabolo, 2022). The number of informants is 10 people, consisting of five internal elements of the bureaucracy and five external elements of society. Internal informants include: Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency (1 person), Head of the Communication and Information Service (1 person), Information and Documentation Management Officer (1 person), performance management officer (1 person), and regional inspectorate (1 person). External informants consisted of community leaders (1 person), representatives of non-governmental organizations (1 person), local academics (1 person), regional media journalists (1 person), and representatives of public consultation forums (1 person). This amount is considered adequate because it has reached data saturation, which is a condition when the information obtained begins to repeat and no longer produces new themes (Naeem et al., 2024).

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews as the main instrument of the study. The interview guide was compiled based on indicators of participatory governance, performance transparency, and collaborative governance developed in the contemporary public administration literature (Waardenburg et al., 2025). In addition to interviews, this study uses documentation techniques for government agency performance reports, planning documents, and digital-based performance information system publications. Limited observations were made to understand participatory forum practices and public information delivery mechanisms. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, while the credibility of the findings is strengthened by member checking techniques to the main informants (Marlina et al., 2025).

Research Implementation Procedure

The research was carried out through several systematic stages. The first stage is a preliminary study to identify problems and develop a conceptual framework for the research. The second stage is in the form of preparing interview instruments and managing research permits to the relevant local governments. The third stage is the collection of field data through interviews, documentation, and observation during the research period. The fourth stage is the process of transcription, categorization, and data verification to ensure the consistency of information. The final stage is the reflective analysis and interpretation of the findings by considering the social and institutional context of the region (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out interactively using the Miles and Huberman analysis model which included data reduction, data presentation, as well as drawing conclusions and verification. (Miles et al., 2014). The coding process was carried out thematically to identify strategy patterns, participatory mechanisms, and their impact on performance transparency. This study uses NVivo 14

software as an analysis tool to organize data, perform thematic categorization, and map the relationships between concepts. The thematic analysis approach was chosen because it is able to reveal the structure, meaning and conceptual relationships in public policy research. The results of the analysis are then analyzed analytically to produce a conceptual model of participatory governance strategies in strengthening the transparency of modern bureaucracy.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Integration of Public Consultation Forums as a Space for Deliberative Participation

The findings show that public consultation forums are an important instrument to expand the communication space between the bureaucracy and the community, especially at the planning and evaluation stages of programs. The forum is integrated with the work agenda of the regional apparatus to make the discussion process more directed, because the discussion refers to the ongoing performance indicators, not just general aspirations. Deliberative participation is seen when the community not only submits proposals, but also tests the rationality of the program and asks for explanations about targets and performance achievements. The integration of forums into the performance cycle also encourages bureaucracies to prepare more concise and easy-to-understand information so that discussions take place equally. Limited observations show that when the forum is clearly guided and the results are acted upon, the level of trust of participants increases and participation becomes more active, especially from community and media elements. Documentation of minutes and forum presentations reinforced the finding that routine and documented forums tend to give rise to patterns of social supervision, as citizens can compare performance promises with realisation reports at subsequent meetings.

To clarify the findings, several interview excerpts describe the experiences of the actors involved. For example, from the element of regional planning: *"If the forum is connected to the performance target, people will not only ask, but ask 'what is the size, when will it be completed, what is the evidence'."* (A-01, January 12, 2026). From a representative of the public consultation forum: *"We prefer that the data is open from the beginning, so that the debate can be clear, not just an opinion."* (J-01, January 18, 2026). From community leaders: *"In the past, there was a meeting, but then it disappeared. Now if there are records and follow-ups, residents will dare to ask again."* (F-01, January 22, 2026). From a local academic: *"The deliberation space is seen when citizens can judge the program by indicators, not just by likes or dislikes."* (H-01, January 27, 2026).

Overall, the informants' quotes show that the public consultation forum has moved from an aspirational space to an indicator-based evaluative space. Thematic analysis shows a shift in the orientation of the discussion from "what is wanted" to "what has been promised and to what extent is achieved". This pattern indicates that the integration of forums with performance systems creates normative pressure for bureaucracies to prepare measurable and openly testable data. The existence of forum records and follow-ups also shows continuity between the deliberation process and administrative accountability. Thus, public

consultation forums not only expand participation, but also strengthen transparency through structured and performance-oriented dialogue mechanisms.

Optimization of Digital-Based Performance Information Systems to Expand Access to Information

The second finding shows that the optimization of digital-based performance information systems strengthens transparency through improved information accessibility and reporting consistency. The digital system used makes it easier for the public to access program summaries, performance indicators, and implementation progress faster than manual mechanisms. However, the research also found that the success of digital systems is not only determined by the availability of the platform, but rather by the quality of data filling, periodic updates, and the ability to transform technical information into a public-friendly format. Documentation analysis shows a tendency to increase reporting regularity when performance management units associate data update schedules with routine internal evaluations. Interviews confirm that it is easier for the public to assess performance when digital information is presented with a concise narrative, clear indicators, and a link to supporting documents. In addition, digital systems serve as an "accountability trail" because data records can be traced back when questions or criticism arise from the public and the media. This reduces the space for informal justification and encourages bureaucracy to be more careful in setting targets and reporting achievements.

The following interview excerpts reinforce the findings regarding the role of digital systems. From the Communication and Information Service: "*The platform exists, but what makes it transparent is not the website; The important thing is that the data is diligent in updating and the reporting language is not complicated.*" (B-01, January 10, 2026). From the performance management official: "*If the indicators have entered the system, we have to be consistent. People can see the traces, so it's hard to make assumptions.*" (D-01, January 16, 2026). From the Information and Documentation Management Officer: "*We learned to make a condensed version. If it's too technical, the public is lazy to read, but if it's made clear, they even ask back and that's good.*" (C-01, January 20, 2026). From a local media journalist: "*If the data is easily accessible, we can cross-check. If it is empty or not updated, it immediately becomes a public question.*" (I-01, January 25, 2026).

The quote emphasizes that performance digitization works effectively when accompanied by a commitment to consistency and simplification of information. The analysis shows that information systems become control instruments not because of their technological nature alone, but because of their ability to record, store, and display data in a sustainable manner. The resulting transparency does not stop at open access, but rather develops into accountability, based on a track record that can be verified by the public. In addition, the presentation of communicative information reduces the distance between the technocratic language of the bureaucracy and public understanding. Thus, digital system optimization strengthens performance transparency

through a combination of data disclosure, reporting consistency, and ease of access to socially testable information.

Strengthening the Role of External Supervisors and Inspectorates in Policy Evaluation

The third theme shows that strengthening the role of external supervisors serves as the main lever so that transparency does not stop at the publication of information, but continues on the evaluation of accountable policies. The findings indicate that the involvement of external actors such as non-governmental organizations, the media, academics, and community leaders strengthens social control through data-driven criticism and follow-up encouragement of field findings. In practice, external monitoring becomes effective when access to performance indicators and reports is available, and there is a space for dialogue to discuss findings openly. On the internal side, the regional inspectorate acts as an important liaison that ensures that public findings do not stop as opinions, but are processed into evaluative inputs that are relevant to performance standards. The thematic analysis shows a pattern that transparency increases when the Inspectorate follows up on public input with document-based clarifications, then encourages regional apparatus to improve indicators or reporting mechanisms. In addition, the public consultation forum is a "channel" that brings together external supervisors, bureaucracy, and the Inspectorate to discuss the gap between targets and realization more openly. These findings confirm that performance transparency strengthens when there is a combination of internal control (audit and evaluation) and social control (public supervision), so that the bureaucracy is encouraged to clarify indicators and close the information gap that has been triggering suspicion.

The following interview excerpts show how the role of supervision works in real life. From the regional inspectorate: *"If there is criticism from residents or NGOs, we do not stop at commenting. We ask for documents and see if the indicators are indeed connected to the realization."* (E-01, January 14, 2026). From a representative of a non-governmental organization: *"We don't want to find fault, but if the data is opened, we can tell you which ones make sense and which ones need to be improved."* (G-01, January 19, 2026). From a local academic: *"The role of outsiders is important to make evaluations more honest. If it's only internal, sometimes someone is hesitant to talk about it."* (H-02, January 24, 2026). From community leaders: *"If there is a space to speak and there is a follow-up, residents feel that their voices are being used, not just heard."* (F-02, January 28, 2026).

The informants' quotes show that the effectiveness of surveillance lies in the connection between public criticism and internal evaluation mechanisms. The analysis shows that transparency increases when external input does not stop as discourse, but translates into document clarifications, indicator adjustments, or improved reporting mechanisms. The synergy between social control and administrative control creates a balance between openness and adherence to performance standards. In this context, the Inspectorate acts as a mediator who integrates public demands with the formal evaluation system of local governments. Thus, strengthening the role of external and internal

supervisors forms a participatory governance ecosystem that encourages transparency to move towards more substantive and measurable accountability.

DISCUSSION

The findings on the integration of public consultation forums as a space for deliberative participation strengthen the arguments in collaborative governance theory that emphasize the importance of face-to-face dialogue, trust, and mutual commitment in producing legitimate public decisions (Lee, 2022). The results of this study show that forums that are directly connected to performance indicators encourage a shift in participation from a consultative model to an accountability-based deliberative model. This is in line with the view Dai & Azhar (2024) which emphasizes that collaborative governance is effective when integrated with decision-making systems and policy implementation mechanisms. However, in contrast to a number of previous studies that have placed public participation as a normative instrument of local democracy, this study shows that the effectiveness of participation is strongly influenced by its structural linkage to performance management systems. Thus, the contribution of this research lies in the affirmation that performance transparency does not only result from information disclosure, but from institutionalized deliberative processes in the bureaucratic performance cycle.

The optimization of digital-based performance information systems in this study also strengthens the literature on digital governance that places technology as a facilitator of transparency and public accountability (Hartutik et al., 2026). However, the findings of this study show that digitalization does not automatically produce transparency if it is not accompanied by consistency in data updates and simplification of information language. This is in line with the study Aslam & Ahmed (2024) which states that data disclosure must be balanced with information quality in order to increase public trust. The study expands on these findings by showing that digital systems function as "accountability footprints" that limit the space for manipulation of performance narratives. Thus, the main difference from previous studies lies in the emphasis that digital transparency is effective when it is directly associated with internal evaluation mechanisms and external social controls.

The strengthening of the role of external supervisors and the Inspectorate in policy evaluation shows that performance transparency requires a balance between administrative control and social control. The literature on public accountability confirms that the combination of internal audit and community oversight is able to improve the quality of public sector governance (Yanuarisa et al., 2025). The results of this study show that external inputs processed through document clarification mechanisms and indicator adjustments result in more substantive accountability than just the publication of performance reports. These findings enrich the study Wang & Guan (2023) which emphasizes the relationship between transparency and public trust, by showing that trust is formed when there is an institutional response to public criticism. Thus, effective transparency does not stop at access to information, but moves towards verifiable corrective actions.

Conceptually, the integration of deliberative forums, digital systems, and external oversight forms a mutually reinforcing participatory governance ecosystem. This model supports the argument that modern bureaucratic reform must combine the dimensions of participation, technology, and accountability in one strategic framework (Frimawan & Andini, 2026). However, this study also identifies contextual factors that affect the effectiveness of the strategy, such as human resource capacity, organizational culture, and community information literacy. In some situations, the limited technical capabilities of the apparatus or the low public understanding of performance indicators can hinder the optimization of transparency. These findings show that the success of participatory governance is strongly influenced by the institutional and social readiness that supports its implementation.

Although this research makes significant theoretical and practical contributions, there are some limitations that need to be noted. The intrinsic case study design limits the generalization of results to the context of other local governments with different characteristics. In addition, the relatively limited number of informants, even though they have reached data saturation, still has the potential to leave perspectives that have not been widely represented. For follow-up research, it is recommended to use a mixed methods approach to quantitatively test the relationship between deliberative participation and increased performance transparency. Comparative research between regions can also enrich understanding of the variations in participatory governance implementation. Thus, this research is the starting point for the development of a more comprehensive and applicable performance transparency-based collaborative governance model in modern bureaucratic reform.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research confirms that participatory governance strategies have a significant role in strengthening the transparency of modern bureaucratic performance when systematically integrated into the performance management cycle of local governments. The integration of deliberative public consultation forums, the optimization of a consistent and easily accessible digital-based performance information system, and the strengthening of the role of external supervisors and the Inspectorate have proven to form a transparency mechanism that is not only informative but also evaluative. Transparency in this context moves from mere data disclosure to substantive accountability that allows the public to test program rationality, assess the achievement of indicators, and drive policy follow-up. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of transparency is strongly influenced by the interconnectedness between public participation, digital infrastructure, and institutional oversight mechanisms.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study demonstrates that participatory governance strategies play a critical role in enhancing bureaucratic transparency when systematically embedded within local government performance management cycles. The integration of deliberative public consultation, accessible digital performance information systems, and strengthened external oversight institutions collectively fosters a transparency framework that extends beyond mere information disclosure toward substantive accountability. In this model, transparency enables public scrutiny of policy rationality, evaluation of performance indicators, and reinforcement of policy responsiveness. Furthermore, the findings highlight that the effectiveness of transparency is contingent upon the synergistic interaction between civic participation, digital infrastructure, and institutional control mechanisms, indicating a multidimensional approach to sustainable governance reform.

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