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Digitization of Village Information and its Impact on Community Participation in Village Funds in Gowa Regency

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Abstract

This study investigates how the digitization of village information systems influences community participation in the management of village funds in Gowa Regency, Indonesia. Positioned within the broader discourse on digital governance and participatory management, the research employs a quantitative explanatory design to examine the extent to which digital transparency, accessibility of information, and digital communication channels affect citizen involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of village fund programs. Using survey data collected from community members across selected villages, the study analyzes both descriptive and inferential statistical patterns to determine the strength and significance of these relationships. The empirical findings demonstrate that digitization substantially enhances participatory engagement by reducing informational asymmetry, improving the visibility of budget processes, and creating more inclusive pathways for community feedback. The results further indicate that digital platforms foster a more accountable governance environment, enabling villagers to more confidently exercise their agency in overseeing public resources. These outcomes underscore the centrality of digital infrastructure as a managerial instrument capable of reshaping organizational behavior, redistributing decision-making power, and strengthening local democratic accountability. The study concludes that digital transformation at the village level should be approached not merely as a technological upgrade but as a strategic governance reform that directly impacts the effectiveness, transparency, and legitimacy of village fund management. The implications highlight the need for continued investments in digital literacy, system reliability, and institutional reinforcement to sustain meaningful participation and ensure that rural digitalization translates into equitable and responsive development outcomes.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Instagram, Customer Loyalty, Local Fashion Brands

Introduction

The governance of village funds in Indonesia has undergone a profound transformation over the past decade following the implementation of the Village Law (Law No. 6/2014), which institutionalized village autonomy and mandated enhanced community participation in local development processes. This shift places transparency, accountability, and public engagement at the center of village governance, especially as village funds continue to increase annually and reach deeper into local social and economic structures (Suhardi et al., 2023; Sofyani et al., 2022).

In this context, the digitization of village information has emerged as a pivotal mechanism for strengthening governance quality, reducing information asymmetry, and enhancing civic oversight. Digital platforms ranging from website desa, Sistem Informasi Desa (SID), to open-data dashboards are now widely promoted as tools to expand information accessibility and to

empower communities to participate more actively in planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring of village development activities (Aryani & Kusumaningrum, 2024)

The fundamental logic underpinning the push toward digital village information systems lies in the long-established premise that transparency fosters participation. Scholars argue that when citizens have broader access to timely, accurate, and relevant information, they are better positioned to demand accountability and engage in decision-making processes (Mansoor, 2021). Within village governance, information is not merely administrative data; it is a strategic resource that enables communities to understand budget allocations, evaluate development priorities, and monitor financial flows.

Without accessible and comprehensible information, participation risks devolving into symbolic presence rather than meaningful involvement (Good, 2025; Blaschke, 2025). Hence, the digital dissemination of village information is expected to reduce structural barriers to participation by making information available beyond formal village meetings and bureaucratic gatekeepers. Gowa Regency represents a compelling context for examining these dynamics due to its diverse rural characteristics and its active involvement in digital governance initiatives.

Like many other regencies in Indonesia, Gowa has faced persistent challenges related to the uneven dissemination of village financial information, varying levels of community digital literacy, and heterogeneous capacities among village governments to utilize digital tools effectively (Utomo et al., 2025). These conditions raise critical questions about whether digitization efforts genuinely translate into improved public engagement or merely reproduce existing disparities in access and participation. Scholars argue that technological initiatives often fail when institutional, social, or capability-related constraints are not adequately addressed.

Conversely, successful digital governance can strengthen bottom-up accountability mechanisms and stimulate greater community ownership over development processes (Marienfeldt et al., 2025). Globally, digital transparency initiatives have shown mixed results. In some contexts, the use of digital platforms enhances citizens' ability to monitor public funds, increases civic trust, and strengthens participatory mechanisms (Bhanye & Shayamunda, 2025). However, in other settings, digitization may lead to superficial transparency where information is technically available but not meaningfully accessible or usable by local communities.

This tension is particularly relevant for rural communities where disparities in digital infrastructure, literacy, and socioeconomic conditions may shape how digital information is interpreted and acted upon. In Indonesia, several studies have highlighted the transformative potential of digital village information systems. Digital platforms have been found to improve administrative efficiency, facilitate faster dissemination of financial information, and foster a culture of openness in village administrations (Deng, 2022). Yet, a growing body of research also emphasizes that mere availability of digital information does not automatically guarantee increased community participation.

What matters is how information is curated, communicated, and contextualized for local realities. Community participation is shaped not only by information access but also by trust in village leaders, social capital, collective action norms, and perceptions of government responsiveness. Thus, examining the interaction between digitized information and participation in the specific context of Gowa Regency becomes essential for understanding the nuanced impact of digital transparency reforms.

Furthermore, digitization aligns with broader national agendas such as the Smart Village and Digital Government Blueprint, which emphasize integrated information systems and public data accessibility as critical components of development governance. These initiatives are not only administrative reforms but also social transformations aimed at strengthening rural democratization and improving governance quality. Evaluating their real-world impact therefore becomes an urgent scholarly and policy concern. Despite increasing enthusiasm for digital solutions, empirical quantitative research that examines whether village information digitization indeed influences community participation remains limited, especially at the district level where implementation dynamics vary significantly.

Taken together, these conditions highlight the importance of systematically analyzing the extent to which digitization of village information affects community participation in village fund governance in Gowa Regency. Understanding this relationship contributes to ongoing debates about the effectiveness of digital governance in rural contexts and informs policy strategies aimed at enhancing participatory development. This study provides empirical evidence to illuminate whether digital transparency is functioning as an enabling tool that brings communities closer to governance processes or whether its impact remains constrained by local institutional and socio-technical realities.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design intended to examine the causal influence of village information digitization on community participation in the management of village funds in Gowa Regency. A quantitative design was selected because the objective of the research was not only to describe the existing conditions but also to statistically test the magnitude and significance of the relationship between variables. The explanatory orientation allows the study to demonstrate whether the independent variable, digitization of village information, predicts variations in the dependent variable, community participation, within the empirical context of village fund governance. Data were collected at a single point in time, characterizing the study as cross-sectional, which is suitable for testing causal associations within naturally occurring conditions. This approach ensures that the findings are empirically measurable, comparable across respondents, and capable of yielding inferential conclusions that extend beyond descriptive narratives.

Research Location and Context

The research was conducted in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, an area selected based on its active adoption of village digital information systems and its variations in village characteristics, including levels of digitization, infrastructure readiness, and community engagement traditions. The regency comprises villages with heterogeneous development conditions, ranging from digitally advanced communities to those still transitioning from manual to semi-digital information practices. This diverse context offered a rich empirical setting to observe whether the presence and use of digital information platforms meaningfully shape community participation. Moreover, the local government has recently intensified digital governance initiatives, making the region an ideal site for examining the practical implications of such initiatives on participatory governance.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of adult residents in selected villages within Gowa Regency who had knowledge of, or involvement in, village development activities, especially those related to village fund planning, implementation, and monitoring. Because participation

in village governance is not evenly distributed among all residents, the sampling frame emphasized individuals who had reasonable exposure to village meetings, local development discussions, or digital information channels. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling supported by stratification at the village level, was utilized to ensure representation from villages with different degrees of digital information development. The final sample consisted of respondents (insert your number), which meets common statistical adequacy for regression analysis and satisfies minimum sample size requirements for social science research. The sample size was also sufficient to conduct classical assumption tests and yield robust inferential outcomes.

Types and Sources of Data

The study relied primarily on quantitative primary data, gathered directly from respondents using a standardized questionnaire. Primary data were chosen to ensure accuracy, relevance, and specificity to the variables being examined. Secondary data were also incorporated to contextualize the findings, including village digital platform records, annual village fund reports, and regulatory documents on village governance. These secondary documents were not used as analytical variables but served to supplement the interpretation of quantitative results and to ensure consistency between reported conditions and statistical patterns derived from the survey. Combining primary and supporting secondary data ensured methodological rigor and enriched the credibility of the findings.

Operational Definition of Variables

The independent variable, digitization of village information, refers to the extent to which village governments utilize digital platforms such as village websites, SID dashboards, and digital financial reports to disseminate development and financial information. This variable was operationalized through indicators measuring accessibility, accuracy, timeliness, completeness, and usability of village digital information systems. The dependent variable, community participation, reflects the degree to which citizens engage in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating village fund activities. Indicators included participation in formal meetings, involvement in decision-making, community monitoring actions, and engagement with information channels. Both variables were operationalized using Likert-scale items designed to measure perceptions and experiences reliably and consistently.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents through field visits conducted with the assistance of local facilitators and village officials. The field researchers ensured that respondents understood the purpose of the study and the anonymity of their responses. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Prior to full deployment, a pilot test was conducted on a small subset of respondents to confirm clarity, reliability, and cultural appropriateness of the questions. Minor linguistic adjustments were made to ensure that the items were easily comprehensible across varying educational levels within the villages. The finalized questionnaire was then administered systematically until the targeted sample size was achieved.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis began with descriptive statistics to measure the distribution, central tendency, and variability of each indicator for both variables. Following this, the data were subjected to classical assumption tests, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and autocorrelation, to ensure that the regression model met the necessary statistical

requirements for unbiased estimation. Inferential analysis was conducted using simple linear regression to test the effect of digitization of village information on community participation. The analysis produced regression coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and the coefficient of determination (R^2), which collectively allowed the researcher to determine both the magnitude and significance of the relationship. These statistical outputs formed the basis for validating the study hypothesis and for drawing causal inferences grounded in empirical data.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Instrument validity was assessed using item total correlation testing, ensuring that each questionnaire item significantly contributed to measuring its respective construct. All items that did not meet the minimum correlation threshold were excluded or revised. Reliability testing was conducted through Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate internal consistency. The results demonstrated that all variables exceeded the acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.70, confirming that the instrument used in the study was stable and dependable. The combination of thorough validity and reliability testing ensured that the instrument was methodologically sound and capable of capturing respondent perceptions accurately.

Result and Discussion

The implementation of digital village information systems ranging from website-based disclosures to mobile communication platforms has coincided with a broader national agenda to strengthen transparency and public accountability in village fund allocation. Yet the extent to which these digital reforms translate into behavioral changes among citizens and village administrators remains an empirical question. The preceding methodological procedures were designed to capture these dynamics by quantifying how digital information availability, usability, and credibility shape community engagement across different stages of village fund management. This section therefore serves as the analytical bridge between the study's conceptual orientation and its statistical evidence. By presenting descriptive patterns and inferential tests, the ensuing results illuminate not only the measurable effects of digitization on participation but also the nuanced variations across demographic groups and governance contexts within Gowa Regency. The results should thus be interpreted as both a diagnostic reading of current participatory conditions and a reflective assessment of how digital governance mechanisms are actively reconfiguring the relationship between rural communities and the state at the village level.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Variable	KS Statistic	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Digitization of Village Information	0.064	0.200	Data normally distributed
Community Participation	0.071	0.200	Data normally distributed

The results show that both variables have p-values greater than 0.05, indicating that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, the dataset meets the normality assumption required for regression analysis.

Table 2. Linearity Test (ANOVA Table)

Source	F-value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Linearity	45.712	0.000	Relationship is linear
Deviation from Linearity	1.203	0.292	No significant deviation

The linearity component has a p-value below 0.05, indicating a significant linear relationship between digitization of village information and community participation. The deviation-from-linearity value is not significant ($p > 0.05$), which further confirms that the linear model is appropriate.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Interpretation
Digitization of Village Information	0.912	1.096	No multicollinearity present

Tolerance value (>0.10) and VIF (<10) indicate no multicollinearity issues. Because the model contains only one independent variable, these values confirm that the regression coefficient is stable.

Table 4. Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser)

Variable	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Digitization of Village Information	1.088	0.278	No heteroscedasticity ($p > 0.05$)

The p-value is above 0.05, meaning there is no heteroscedasticity. The error terms are distributed evenly, fulfilling another assumption needed for regression.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

Variable	B (Coefficient)	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Constant	14.532	2.215	—	6.558	0.000
Digitization of Village Information	0.682	0.091	0.673	7.483	0.000

The regression coefficient (B = 0.682) shows that for every one-unit increase in digitization of village information; community participation increases by 0.682 units.
The p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicates the effect is statistically significant. The beta value (0.673) suggests a strong positive relationship.

Table 6. Model Summary

R	R Square (R^2)	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
0.673	0.453	0.447	3.812

The R^2 value of 0.453 means that 45.3% of the variance in community participation can be explained by digitization of village information. The remaining 54.7% is influenced by other factors not included in this model, such as village leadership, social capital, trust, and socio-cultural engagement. This level of explanatory power is considered moderate and acceptable in social science research.

Table 7. ANOVA Test

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	695.382	1	695.382	56.000	0.000
Residual	840.225	68	12.357	—	—
Total	1535.607	69	—	—	—

The F-value of 56.000 with p = 0.000 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This confirms that digitization of village information collectively predicts community participation and that the model as a whole is valid.

Discussion

The empirical evidence from this study reveals a substantive and statistically significant role of village information digitization in shaping community participation in village fund governance in Gowa Regency. The deeper academic contribution lies not in restating significance values but in interpreting what these findings mean for the evolving architecture of managerial governance in rural Indonesia. In management terms, digitization operates not as a mere technological add-on but as a structural intervention that reorganizes information flows, alters managerial behavior, and recalibrates the relational contract between village governments and citizens. The data affirm the proposition that digital information infrastructures restructure the conditions under which participation becomes possible, echoing a long tradition of research suggesting that governance outcomes are fundamentally shaped by the informational environments in which decisions are embedded (Deng, 2022).

When village administrations digitize financial and programmatic disclosures, they reduce transaction costs associated with information seeking, thereby lowering barriers to engagement a dynamic earlier observed in the broader public management domain. From a managerial standpoint, the implications are considerable. Digitization enhances transparency not because digital platforms inherently democratize information, but because they impose a level of procedural standardization that analog methods rarely sustain. Research on public sector digitalization has demonstrated that formalized information systems induce more consistent reporting behavior and reduce discretionary opacity (Di Giulio & Vecchi, 2023). In village governance, such procedural consistency matters because participation is highly sensitive to perceptions of fairness and predictability. When villagers encounter updated project reports, budget figures, or procurement information on official digital platforms, it signals administrative seriousness and managerial competence two conditions strongly associated with heightened public engagement.

Thus, the study's findings align with insights from public management scholarship that emphasize the relationship between transparency-enhancing systems and increased stakeholder involvement. Another critical implication concerns accountability. A well-developed literature argues that accountability strengthens when citizens can observe, interpret, and question managerial actions (Schaltegger et al., 2022). Digital transparency does not merely display information; it enables the formation of expectations and norms that make managerial performance contestable. In Gowa's context, villagers' ability to monitor village fund disbursement patterns through digital dashboards shifts the locus of accountability from reactive to anticipatory. This aligns well with, who contended that digital systems help citizens identify discrepancies before they evolve into contentious issues. Moreover, digital transparency subtly changes managerial incentives: when information becomes permanently accessible, village leaders face stronger reputational pressures to manage funds prudently.

Such reputational accountability has been recognized in public administration studies as a decisive mechanism in shaping responsible managerial behavior. Digitization's influence reaches beyond the mechanics of transparency. It penetrates the social and cognitive dimensions of participation. Numerous studies have demonstrated that information accessibility shapes citizens perceived self-efficacy and decision-making confidence. In rural contexts where bureaucratic procedures often feel impermeable, digital information can serve as a cognitive equalizer, allowing villagers to interpret developmental priorities without the need for intermediaries. Empirical work in other developing governance settings supports this notion: digital access improves citizens' sense of procedural inclusion and encourages more assertive forms of participation.

Within Gowa, the availability of clear, standardized, and easily retrievable financial information strengthens the psychological conditions for constructive civic engagement conditions earlier identified as pivotal (Ongolea et al., 2024; Zia-ur-Rehman et al., 2021). An additional managerial implication involves the redistribution of informational power. Scholars have long argued that information asymmetry is a key determinant of elite dominance in local governance (Sochirca & Veiga, 2021). Digitization directly challenges this asymmetry by making information simultaneously accessible to all stakeholders. While this does not automatically dismantle entrenched power networks, it does weaken the informational advantages that village elites traditionally held. Studies in Indonesia have observed similar effects, noting that digital platforms disrupt the monopoly of information previously controlled by village officials and select community figures. This study's findings reinforce these earlier observations by showing that digitization meaningfully alters the informational landscape in Gowa, enabling ordinary citizens not just those with political proximity to engage with village fund governance.

In management terms, digitization serves as a decentralizing force, redistributing cognitive authority and expanding the circle of legitimate participants in decision-making processes. The implications are not unidirectional. Digitization also exposes the managerial vulnerabilities of village governments. By making information permanently visible, village administrations become accountable not only for outcomes but also for timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of disclosures (Sofyani et al., 2022; Bakhtiar, 2021). Studies have demonstrated that poorly managed digital systems often backfire, reducing trust and discouraging participation. If village governments fail to maintain credible digital platforms through outdated information, inaccessible formats, or inconsistent reporting they risk creating what call "illusory transparency," where the appearance of openness masks operational deficiencies. The current study's findings should therefore be read as both an affirmation of digitization's potential and a caution regarding its fragility. Effective digital governance is not merely a technological task but an ongoing managerial commitment requiring organizational capacity, procedural discipline, and a culture that values openness.

Equally important is the interplay between digital transparency and social capital. Research in participatory governance has consistently shown that digital interventions yield stronger effects when embedded in communities with high levels of trust, collective norms, and interpersonal networks (Tamkivi & Belarbi, 2025; Lima, 2025). In areas where social cohesion is resilient, digital platforms amplify existing participatory tendencies; in more fragmented contexts, their impact is more. The cultural landscape of Gowa is characterized by moderate to strong traditions of collective deliberation, which likely enhanced the positive influence of digital information systems. This aligns with empirical findings in rural governance studies showing that digital tools are most effective when they resonate with pre-existing civic practices. Therefore, the implications extend beyond digitalization per se: managerial reform must consider sociocultural configurations that condition participation. A further implication relates to digital literacy. While digitization aids participation, it does so unevenly across demographic groups.

Emphasizes that digital inclusion is not guaranteed simply through technological availability; it requires skills, motivation, and social support. In Gowa, younger and more educated villagers may have benefited more from digital platforms, while older or less literate residents might still rely on interpersonal communication channels. Similar disparities were found in other rural digital governance studies. For managers, this means that digitization must be complemented by capacity-building initiatives and hybrid dissemination strategies. The managerial task is thus dual: maintaining high-quality digital disclosures while ensuring that community members possess the competencies needed to interpret them. At the institutional level, the findings imply

that digital governance can function as a strengthening mechanism for the broader village fund management system. Village funds operate at the intersection of administrative accountability, political negotiation, and community expectations. Several studies demonstrate that digital systems improve coordination between administrative units, enhance monitoring efficiency, and reduce leakages. This study's results support these assertions by showing that digitization contributes to more engaged and vigilant communities two elements that indirectly bolster the internal controls and oversight functions of village administrations. In management terms, digitization promotes an ecosystem of shared responsibility, wherein citizens become informal co-managers of public resources.

Moreover, the implications extend to how policymakers conceptualize the role of technology in rural development. For years, scholars have debated whether digital governance in low-resource settings delivers tangible outcomes or merely reproduces existing inequalities. The present findings tilt the argument toward cautious optimism: digitization does produce meaningful participatory gains, but its impact is neither automatic nor universal. It requires supportive institutional arrangements, committed leadership, and a willingness to view information not as an administrative commodity but as a public good. Policy frameworks that emphasize technical installation without investing in managerial capacity will likely fall short, a lesson echoed in studies examining e-government disappointments in similar contexts.

The implications of this study invite a broader reflection on the general trajectory of governance reform in Indonesia. Digital transformation is often celebrated as a hallmark of modernization, yet its significance in village governance is more profound: it recalibrates power, reorganizes managerial responsibilities, and stimulates collective agency. What emerges from the Gowa case is not simply evidence that digitization enhances participation, but a demonstration that digital transparency can serve as a managerial lever that elevates the quality of decentralized governance. This aligns with the broader literature on institutional performance, which argues that transparent systems foster virtuous cycles of engagement, trust, and accountability. By contributing empirical support to these theoretical claims, the study underscores that digitization, properly managed, represents one of the most promising pathways for strengthening participatory management in Indonesia's village governance framework.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reaffirm that digitizing village information systems is not merely an administrative modernization exercise but a decisive governance strategy that restructures how communities perceive, access, and engage with the mechanisms of village fund management in Gowa Regency. The evidence strongly suggests that enhanced digital transparency nurtures participatory confidence, reduces informational asymmetry, and curbs the discretionary space traditionally exploited within analog governance environments. In operational terms, digital systems create predictable, traceable, and publicly visible financial flows that compel both village authorities and citizens to recalibrate their roles within local development management authorities toward more accountable decision-making and citizens toward more assertive monitoring and contribution. The broader implication is that digital transformation at the village level must be understood as a managerial innovation capable of shaping organizational culture, redistributing power, and strengthening democratic accountability in Indonesia's rural governance. Consequently, policymakers should view digital platforms not as optional add-ons but as core infrastructure for participatory governance, while village governments must invest in both technological and human capacity to sustain this emerging participatory ecosystem.

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