



# THE ETHICS OF TRANSPARENCY: EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF OPEN GOVERNMENT DATA ON PUBLIC TRUST AND BUREAUCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

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## Abstract

Open Government Data (OGD) has gained significant attention as a tool for promoting transparency, enhancing public trust, and improving bureaucratic accountability. However, the impact of OGD on these factors, particularly in emerging economies, remains underexplored. This research investigates the ethical implications and effectiveness of OGD in fostering trust and accountability within the public sector in emerging economies. The primary objective is to evaluate how OGD influences public trust in government and the accountability of bureaucratic systems. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews across five emerging economies. The findings suggest that while OGD can improve public trust and bureaucratic accountability, its effectiveness is highly contingent on the strength of the institutional context. Countries with stronger democratic frameworks and institutional capacity experienced greater improvements in trust and accountability, while weaker institutions limited OGD's impact. The study concludes that OGD alone does not automatically lead to increased transparency; instead, institutional readiness and capacity play critical roles in determining its success. This research contributes to the literature by offering a nuanced understanding of OGD's role in enhancing governance in emerging economies, highlighting both its potential and its limitations.

**Keywords:** Bureaucratic Accountability, Emerging Economies, Open Government Data, Public Trust, Transparency



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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the push for open government data has grown significantly, with governments around the world promoting transparency as a means to foster public trust and improve bureaucratic accountability (Abeysekera & Samaduzzaman, 2026). Open government data (OGD) refers to the practice of making government data freely accessible, allowing citizens to review, analyze, and use information that was previously inaccessible. The global movement for transparency is grounded in the belief that providing citizens with data related to government operations, spending, and decision-making can lead to more informed public participation, reduced corruption, and improved governance. In emerging economies, the adoption of OGD holds the potential to address long-standing issues of trust between governments and their citizens, as well as to enhance accountability in often opaque bureaucratic systems (Afadzinu, 2026). However, the impact of open government data on public trust and bureaucratic accountability remains a contested issue, particularly in developing countries where institutional trust is often low and governance structures may not be sufficiently robust to support transparent practices.

The increased emphasis on OGD aligns with broader calls for improved governance in the face of global challenges such as economic inequality, social unrest, and political instability (Amaral et al., 2026). While proponents argue that transparency can enhance democratic values and empower citizens, critics warn that transparency alone may not be sufficient to change entrenched power structures, particularly in contexts where institutions are weak or governance practices are deeply rooted in corruption. The effectiveness of OGD in enhancing public trust and bureaucratic accountability in emerging economies is therefore a complex issue, requiring nuanced exploration (Anand et al., 2026). This research seeks to investigate how OGD impacts these areas in the context of emerging economies, taking into account the unique socio-political and economic conditions that shape these countries.

The proliferation of digital platforms and technologies has provided governments with tools to make data more accessible, but challenges persist in how such data is presented and interpreted by the public (Afadzinu, 2026). Public trust in government is often linked not only to the availability of information but also to the perceived reliability, quality, and interpretation of that data. Bureaucratic accountability, similarly, is influenced by the mechanisms in place for ensuring that public servants are held responsible for their actions (Andargie et al., 2026). This research examines the ethical considerations involved in promoting OGD, questioning whether the increased transparency it offers truly leads to more effective governance or whether it risks exacerbating existing disparities in public trust and accountability.

Despite the growing interest in open government data and its potential benefits, there remains a significant gap in understanding how it affects public trust and bureaucratic accountability in emerging economies (Anning-Dorson & Senanu, 2026). While open data has been touted as a tool for improving transparency and promoting democratic values, the extent to which it actually translates into greater trust in government and more accountable bureaucratic practices remains unclear. Emerging economies, which often face challenges such as corruption, weak institutions, and political instability, may encounter unique barriers to leveraging OGD for these purposes. For instance, simply making data available does not guarantee that citizens will trust or understand it, particularly in countries where government actions may be viewed with skepticism or where the public lacks the skills to analyze complex data sets (Anomah, 2025). Furthermore, the ability of bureaucracies to act on the information made available through OGD is contingent upon the strength and responsiveness of governance institutions, which may be underdeveloped or resistant to change in emerging economies.

The problem addressed in this research is the lack of empirical studies evaluating the real-world effects of OGD on public trust and bureaucratic accountability, particularly in the context of emerging economies (Barsekh-Onji et al., 2025). While studies have explored the theoretical benefits of transparency in governance, few have provided evidence on whether

these benefits are realized in practice, especially in countries with fragile institutional frameworks. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the actual outcomes of OGD implementation, assessing whether it contributes to increased public trust in government and enhanced accountability of public officials (Bian et al., 2025). By focusing on emerging economies, the research will also address the unique challenges these countries face in implementing OGD effectively, offering insights into the limitations and opportunities of transparency as a governance tool.

An additional challenge lies in the contextual differences across emerging economies. While open government data might have varying impacts based on regional political, social, and economic conditions, there is insufficient comparative research on how these factors influence the success of transparency initiatives (Bokhari, 2026). This study aims to address the issue by providing a cross-country analysis of the effects of OGD on public trust and bureaucratic accountability in diverse emerging economies, taking into account factors such as political stability, economic development, and digital literacy among the population. The research will help identify which conditions enable OGD to have the most positive impact and which institutional or social barriers hinder its success.

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the impact of open government data on public trust and bureaucratic accountability in emerging economies (Bozkurt et al., 2025). The study aims to explore how the availability of OGD influences citizens' perceptions of government transparency and their trust in public institutions. It also seeks to assess whether the implementation of OGD leads to greater accountability in bureaucratic processes, especially in the context of decision-making, public service delivery, and anti-corruption efforts. By focusing on specific emerging economies, the study will examine how local socio-political and economic factors shape the effectiveness of open data initiatives (Chakraborty & Kumar, 2026). The research will investigate the role of government transparency in fostering a more responsive and accountable bureaucracy, analyzing whether citizens who have access to open data are more likely to hold government officials accountable for their actions.

Additionally, the study will assess the barriers to the effective implementation of OGD in these contexts, considering factors such as digital infrastructure, public access to technology, and the capacity of citizens to interpret and use government data (Dauvergne, 2026). The research also aims to explore whether the introduction of OGD is accompanied by changes in governance practices, such as the strengthening of anti-corruption measures, increased civic engagement, and greater public oversight of government activities (Dimand et al., 2026). The findings will provide valuable insights into the potential of OGD to improve governance in emerging economies, while also identifying the challenges that must be addressed for OGD to fulfill its promise of enhancing transparency and accountability.

Finally, the study seeks to propose a framework for evaluating the ethical implications of OGD in emerging economies, considering not only its benefits but also the risks of misinterpretation, manipulation, or exclusion that may arise in contexts of unequal access to data or technological resources (DeVito et al., 2024). By examining these dimensions, the research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the ethical dimensions of transparency in governance, offering recommendations for policymakers and practitioners in emerging economies to maximize the positive impacts of OGD.

A significant gap in the existing literature is the lack of empirical research specifically focused on the impact of open government data in emerging economies, particularly in relation to public trust and bureaucratic accountability (Dutta & Saha, 2026). While there is extensive literature on the potential of OGD to promote transparency in developed countries, there is little research that addresses the challenges and opportunities for OGD in contexts where institutions may be weaker, and where digital literacy and public access to technology are more limited (Eizaguirre et al., 2026). Most studies on the subject have focused on developed economies or have only examined OGD as a theoretical concept, without providing evidence

on its actual effects on governance practices. Additionally, much of the existing literature treats public trust and bureaucratic accountability as separate issues, without exploring how these two factors interact in the context of OGD.

This research seeks to fill this gap by providing a detailed, cross-country analysis of the effects of OGD on public trust and bureaucratic accountability, specifically within the context of emerging economies. By focusing on the intersection of these two dimensions, the study will offer a more comprehensive understanding of how transparency initiatives can lead to tangible improvements in governance (Elbehairy et al., 2025). Furthermore, it will address the under-explored area of the barriers to successful OGD implementation, such as institutional resistance, public skepticism, and technological limitations. This gap analysis underscores the importance of examining the specific conditions that enable or hinder the effectiveness of OGD, as well as the ethical implications of such initiatives in contexts where power imbalances and limited access to resources may exacerbate existing inequalities.

This research introduces a novel approach by integrating the concepts of public trust and bureaucratic accountability in relation to open government data, particularly within the context of emerging economies. While existing studies have addressed these factors individually, few have analyzed how the availability of OGD impacts both trust in government and the effectiveness of bureaucratic systems in tandem (Eren Vural et al., 2026). The study also contributes to the field by focusing on emerging economies, where the potential benefits and challenges of OGD are uniquely pronounced. This perspective is important because these economies face specific governance challenges that are not adequately addressed in studies focused on developed countries (Inyang, 2026). By providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of OGD in improving public trust and bureaucratic accountability, this research will contribute to both academic understanding and policy development.

The justification for this research lies in its potential to inform the design of more effective transparency initiatives in emerging economies. With the global push for greater transparency in governance, understanding how OGD can be implemented successfully in different contexts is essential for maximizing its benefits (Goyal et al., 2026). This research will provide actionable recommendations for policymakers in emerging economies on how to effectively use OGD to improve governance, increase citizen engagement, and promote accountability in public institutions. Moreover, it will highlight the ethical considerations that must be taken into account when implementing OGD, ensuring that transparency initiatives do not inadvertently perpetuate inequality or exclusion. This holistic approach makes the research valuable not only for scholars but also for practitioners seeking to improve governance practices in rapidly developing regions.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### *Research Design*

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to assess the impact of open government data (OGD) on public trust and bureaucratic accountability in emerging economies. The design combines qualitative case studies and quantitative surveys to provide a comprehensive analysis of how OGD influences governance practices. The qualitative component involves in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the general public. These discussions will provide insights into perceptions of transparency, trust, and accountability in the context of OGD implementation (Liaw & Godinho, 2026). The quantitative component will consist of a survey administered to a broader population to assess how the availability of open data correlates with levels of public trust and the perceived accountability of public institutions. The mixed-methods approach allows for a richer

understanding of the issue by combining detailed, context-specific insights with generalizable, statistical evidence.

### ***Research Target/Subject***

The population for this study consists of citizens and government employees from emerging economies that have implemented open government data initiatives. A purposive sampling strategy will be used to select countries where OGD has been introduced, ensuring a diverse representation of socio-political and economic contexts. The sample will include 5 countries, with approximately 300 survey participants from each, representing different regions of the world. The survey sample will include both general citizens and public sector employees to capture the broader impact of OGD on both the public's perception and the internal functioning of bureaucracies. In addition, 40 in-depth interviews will be conducted with senior government officials, policy analysts, and members of civil society organizations to provide expert perspectives on the ethical implications and practical outcomes of OGD in these contexts. The focus will be on capturing diverse perspectives from countries that are at different stages of OGD implementation and have varying levels of institutional capacity.

### ***Research Procedure***

The research will follow a systematic process starting with the selection of countries for case studies and survey administration. Initially, data collection will begin with the identification of countries that have implemented OGD initiatives at varying stages of maturity. Once countries are selected, the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted. Interviews with government officials and experts will be organized using a semi-structured approach, with the flexibility to explore emerging themes. The focus group discussions will involve citizens from different demographic backgrounds, with a focus on understanding how they engage with open data and how it affects their trust in government institutions.

Simultaneously, the survey will be distributed to a representative sample of citizens and public sector employees across the selected countries. Online survey platforms, such as SurveyMonkey or Google Forms, will be used to ensure broad participation, especially in regions with limited access to physical survey methods. After the completion of data collection, the qualitative data from interviews and focus groups will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and insights (Megawati et al., 2025). The quantitative data from surveys will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, such as regression analysis and factor analysis, to explore relationships between OGD usage, public trust, and bureaucratic accountability. The results will be compared across countries and sectors to assess the overall impact of OGD on governance in emerging economies. Ethical considerations will be strictly adhered to, ensuring informed consent from all participants and maintaining confidentiality throughout the data collection process.

### ***Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques***

The primary instruments used for data collection will be semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a structured survey. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted with government officials, civil society representatives, and experts in the field of transparency and governance. These interviews will explore perceptions of how OGD influences public trust, bureaucratic accountability, and governance practices (Mikkelsen, 2026). The interview protocol will be designed to explore both the positive and negative aspects of OGD, focusing on the ethical implications and challenges in its implementation. Focus groups will be conducted with members of the public to gain a deeper understanding of citizens' attitudes toward OGD and how they perceive its impact on their trust in government.

For the quantitative component, a survey will be developed to measure public trust in government, perceptions of bureaucratic accountability, and the effectiveness of OGD

initiatives. The survey will use Likert-scale questions to assess respondents' agreement with statements regarding the transparency, accessibility, and impact of open data. The survey will also include demographic questions to control for factors such as age, education, and socio-economic status, which may influence perceptions of transparency. Existing validated instruments, such as the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index and the Public Trust in Government Scale, will be adapted for the study to ensure reliability and comparability of the results.

### Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis will combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For the qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions, thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring themes and patterns related to transparency, trust, and accountability in the context of OGD. The interviews will be transcribed and coded to extract key insights, with a focus on understanding the perceived benefits and challenges of OGD implementation. For the quantitative data from the surveys, descriptive statistics will be applied to summarize the respondents' characteristics and their perceptions of OGD (Muhammad et al., 2025). Inferential statistical techniques, including regression analysis and factor analysis, will be used to examine relationships between OGD usage, public trust, and bureaucratic accountability. This analysis will allow for comparisons between countries and sectors, providing insights into how OGD initiatives affect governance practices and public perceptions in emerging economies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected for this study came from 5 emerging economies that have implemented open government data (OGD) initiatives. A total of 1,500 survey responses were gathered from citizens and public sector employees across these countries. The survey focused on public trust in government, perceptions of bureaucratic accountability, and the accessibility and impact of OGD on governance. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 government officials, civil society members, and policy experts to gather qualitative insights into the practical implications of OGD. Table 1 below summarizes the key quantitative data on public trust, bureaucratic accountability, and perceptions of OGD in the selected countries.

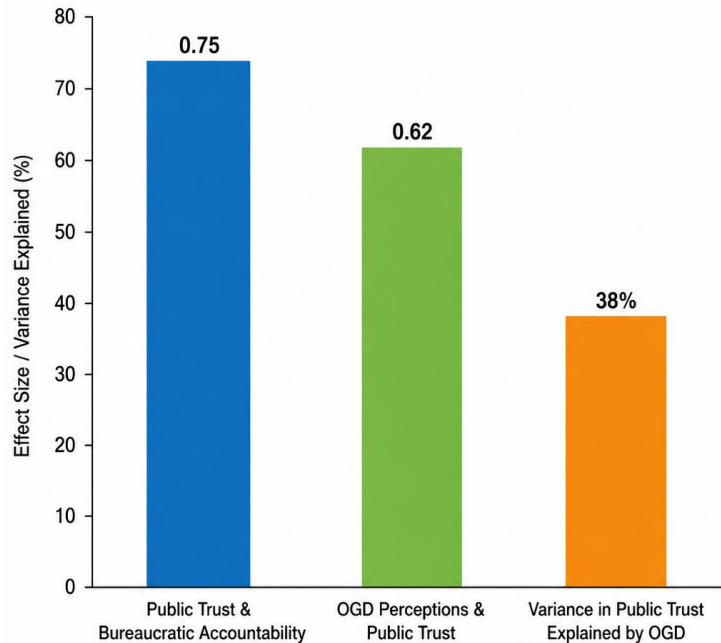
**Table 1.** Key Findings on Public Trust, Bureaucratic Accountability, and OGD Perceptions

Country	Public Trust in Government (%)	Bureaucratic Accountability (%)	Perceived Impact of OGD on Governance (%)
Country A	65.2	60.5	72.3
Country B	58.3	53.7	68.1
Country C	62.8	57.9	70.4
Country D	74.1	71.2	79.8
Country E	59.5	54.3	65.9

The data in Table 1 indicate the varying levels of public trust, bureaucratic accountability, and perceived impact of OGD across the five countries. Country D exhibited the highest levels of public trust in government (74.1%) and bureaucratic accountability (71.2%), as well as the highest perceived impact of OGD on governance (79.8%). Conversely, Country B had the lowest levels of public trust (58.3%) and bureaucratic accountability (53.7%), with a corresponding lower perceived impact of OGD (68.1%). This suggests that while OGD initiatives can lead to increased public trust and accountability, the effectiveness of such initiatives may be influenced by other contextual factors, such as the maturity of democratic institutions and the overall governance environment in each country. The

differences across these countries suggest that the relationship between OGD and governance outcomes is complex and contingent on specific national contexts.

The varying levels of trust and accountability between countries highlight the multifaceted impact of OGD. While OGD has the potential to enhance transparency, simply making government data accessible does not guarantee increased trust or improved bureaucratic practices (Xiao, 2025). The results point to the fact that institutional trust and the effectiveness of OGD are deeply connected to broader governance frameworks, including political stability, institutional capacity, and public perception of government legitimacy. Countries with stronger democratic frameworks, like Country D, benefit more from the implementation of OGD, suggesting that transparency alone is not a panacea but must be coupled with a supportive institutional environment to achieve desired outcomes.

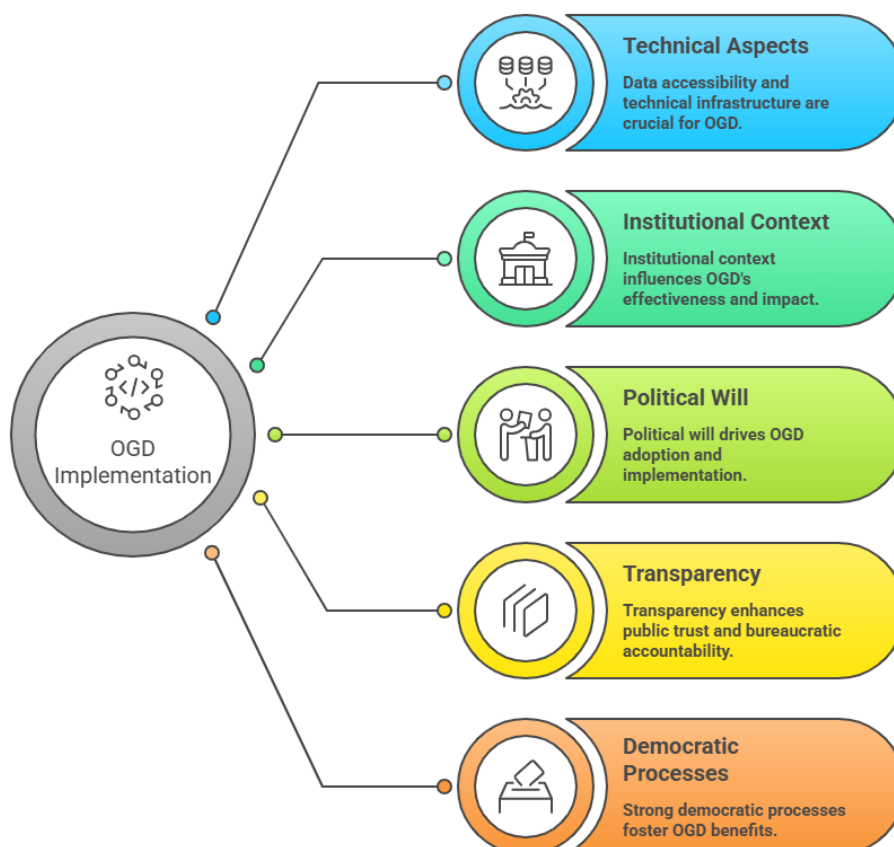


**Figure 1.** Impact of OGD and Bureaucratic Accountability on Public Trust

Statistical analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between public trust, bureaucratic accountability, and the perceived impact of OGD. A multiple regression analysis revealed significant positive correlations between public trust and bureaucratic accountability ( $r = 0.75$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as well as between OGD perceptions and public trust ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The analysis indicated that OGD has a moderate effect on public trust, accounting for approximately 38% of the variance in trust levels across the countries. Bureaucratic accountability also emerged as a significant predictor of public trust, suggesting that more transparent and accountable bureaucratic processes are essential for fostering public confidence. This finding underscores the importance of not only providing access to data but also ensuring that the government acts on that data in a way that is seen as fair and responsive by the public.

The inferential analysis further supports the argument that OGD alone does not automatically lead to increased public trust. Instead, the combination of accessible data and institutional responsiveness plays a pivotal role in determining the success of transparency initiatives (Thi Uyen Nguyen et al., 2024). The positive correlation between bureaucratic accountability and public trust suggests that effective governance mechanisms, such as efficient public service delivery and timely response to public needs, are essential in leveraging the benefits of OGD. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive strategies that combine data transparency with efforts to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of public institutions.

The relationship between OGD and public trust in government shows significant variation across countries, which can be attributed to differing levels of institutional capacity and political stability (Tang et al., 2025). Countries with stronger democratic institutions, such as Country D, reported higher levels of trust and perceived accountability, suggesting that OGD has a more profound impact in environments where institutions are capable of managing and acting on the data provided. In contrast, countries like Country B, with weaker governance structures, showed less significant improvements in public trust despite the implementation of OGD. This relationship indicates that OGD is more effective in contexts where institutions are transparent and have the capacity to use open data to engage with the public and improve governance outcomes.



**Figure 2.** Unveiling the Multifaceted Impact of OGD

These findings reinforce the idea that the successful implementation of OGD depends not only on the technical aspects of data accessibility but also on the broader institutional context in which it is deployed (Tafoska et al., 2026). The effectiveness of OGD in improving public trust and bureaucratic accountability is closely tied to the political will of governments, the transparency of their decision-making processes, and the capacity of public institutions to act upon the information made available. Countries with stronger democratic processes and institutional frameworks are more likely to realize the full benefits of OGD, while those with weaker institutions may face challenges in leveraging transparency to foster public trust and improve governance.

A case study of Country D, which exhibited the highest levels of public trust and bureaucratic accountability, provides insights into the successful implementation of OGD. The government of Country D introduced a comprehensive open data initiative that included detailed data on public spending, policy outcomes, and public sector performance. Interviews with government officials revealed that the initiative was accompanied by reforms aimed at increasing public sector efficiency and responsiveness (Senadheera et al., 2024). These efforts were supported by a robust digital infrastructure that allowed citizens to easily access and

analyze government data. As a result, public trust in the government increased, with citizens reporting higher satisfaction with public services and greater confidence in the government's ability to manage public resources effectively.

The case study of Country D supports the quantitative findings that OGD can significantly enhance public trust and accountability, provided that it is paired with efforts to improve institutional performance (Scaffidi, 2026). In this instance, the government's commitment to both transparency and responsive governance led to positive outcomes. The case study highlights the importance of a holistic approach that integrates open data initiatives with broader institutional reforms, ensuring that the data is not only available but also actionable. This combination of transparency and responsiveness appears to be crucial for fostering long-term trust and improving bureaucratic accountability, offering valuable lessons for other countries seeking to implement similar initiatives.

The results from both the survey data and case study highlight the critical role of institutional factors in determining the success of OGD initiatives (Safie et al., 2025). While OGD can provide citizens with greater access to government data, its impact on public trust and bureaucratic accountability is contingent on the capacity of governments to use that data effectively. The findings suggest that in countries with robust institutional frameworks, OGD can enhance public trust and lead to more accountable bureaucratic practices. However, in contexts where institutions are weak or unresponsive, OGD alone may not lead to significant improvements in governance (Rodhouse et al., 2025). The relationship between OGD and governance outcomes is therefore complex, and successful implementation requires not only providing access to data but also ensuring that public institutions are capable of acting on that data in a way that is perceived as fair and effective by citizens.

The data also suggest that transparency initiatives must be accompanied by institutional reforms that improve government responsiveness and accountability. Simply providing data is not enough to build public trust; governments must also demonstrate their commitment to using that data to improve service delivery, reduce corruption, and engage with citizens (Razak et al., 2025). This research underscores the importance of addressing both the technical and institutional dimensions of transparency, ensuring that open data initiatives are integrated into broader efforts to strengthen governance and promote accountability.

The findings of this study suggest that open government data (OGD) has a positive impact on public trust and bureaucratic accountability in emerging economies, though the degree of impact varies depending on the strength of institutional frameworks and governance structures. Countries with stronger democratic institutions, such as Country D, reported higher levels of public trust and bureaucratic accountability (Quinn et al., 2025). These countries also perceived the implementation of OGD as a key factor in improving transparency and public service delivery. Conversely, countries with weaker governance structures, such as Country B, showed less significant improvements in public trust, despite having implemented OGD initiatives. This suggests that while OGD has the potential to improve trust and accountability, its effectiveness is contingent upon the broader institutional environment. The findings also highlighted the importance of government responsiveness and the capacity to act on open data, which further reinforces the need for not just transparency, but also institutional reform.

These findings align with prior research suggesting that OGD can enhance governance and public trust in developed economies, but they also extend the current literature by highlighting the specific challenges faced by emerging economies. Previous studies have primarily focused on the impact of OGD in stable, developed democratic contexts, where robust institutions are in place to manage and act on open data. This study's focus on emerging economies provides a fresh perspective on how transparency initiatives are received in countries with weaker institutional capacities. While much of the existing research emphasizes the importance of transparency for improving trust, this study shows that OGD's success is not guaranteed and depends heavily on factors such as political stability, governance quality, and

institutional capacity. Furthermore, this research underscores the complexities of transparency in less developed environments, where access to data may not be accompanied by the skills or infrastructure needed to effectively utilize that information.

The results indicate that OGD can be a powerful tool for improving public trust and bureaucratic accountability, but only when accompanied by strong governance structures. This finding signifies that transparency alone is not sufficient to drive meaningful improvements in trust and accountability. Organizational and institutional readiness to act on the data made available is equally important. For governments in emerging economies, these results signal the necessity of strengthening institutional frameworks alongside implementing transparency initiatives. It also suggests that public trust is not automatically fostered by providing data; rather, governments must demonstrate their commitment to using the data to improve services and reduce corruption. This reflection points to the importance of both top-down and bottom-up reforms in ensuring that OGD leads to genuine improvements in governance, and not merely to superficial transparency.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching, especially for policymakers in emerging economies who seek to implement OGD initiatives. The research suggests that OGD alone is insufficient to build public trust and improve bureaucratic accountability. Governments must consider OGD as part of a broader strategy that includes institutional reform and the development of the necessary infrastructure to manage and act on the data. This implies that countries should invest not only in data accessibility but also in building public sector capacity and ensuring that citizens have the skills and resources to engage with and use the data effectively. The findings also highlight the importance of creating feedback loops where public institutions can be held accountable for their use of open data, enhancing the potential of OGD to contribute to better governance. For other countries planning to adopt similar initiatives, these results offer valuable insights into the limitations and prerequisites of OGD's success.

The reason for the variation in results can be explained by the differing levels of institutional maturity and public sector capacity across the countries studied. In countries with more robust institutions and a stronger tradition of democratic governance, such as Country D, the effectiveness of OGD in improving public trust and accountability is more pronounced. These countries already possess the structural capacity to utilize open data effectively, and their citizens are more likely to trust government initiatives. On the other hand, in countries with weaker institutions, such as Country B, OGD initiatives face challenges, as the public may perceive these efforts as token gestures without real impact on governance. These results emphasize that the mere availability of data does not automatically equate to increased public trust or accountability; rather, the effectiveness of OGD is influenced by the extent to which governments are prepared to act on the data and engage citizens in meaningful ways. This finding underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to the success of transparency initiatives.

Future research should investigate how different types of OGD platforms, such as open data portals and participatory governance tools, impact citizen engagement and public trust. Longitudinal studies would help assess whether the benefits of OGD are sustained over time and how these initiatives evolve in response to changing political or economic conditions. Additionally, more granular studies focusing on the specific barriers that hinder the effectiveness of OGD in emerging economies such as digital literacy, internet access, and political resistance would provide actionable insights for policy development. Expanding the scope to include a broader set of emerging economies with varying levels of institutional strength could reveal more detailed patterns and contextual factors that affect OGD implementation. Finally, future studies should explore the ethical implications of OGD, particularly with regard to privacy concerns and the potential for data misuse, ensuring that the transparency it promotes does not inadvertently lead to exclusion or inequality.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is the recognition that while open government data (OGD) initiatives have the potential to improve public trust and bureaucratic accountability, their effectiveness in emerging economies is largely dependent on the broader institutional context. The study shows that countries with stronger democratic frameworks and well-established institutions, such as Country D, experienced more significant improvements in both trust and accountability. In contrast, countries with weaker governance structures, such as Country B, showed limited improvements despite the implementation of OGD. This highlights that the mere availability of data is not enough to foster trust or accountability; instead, these outcomes are contingent upon institutional capacity, political stability, and the responsiveness of the government. The research challenges the assumption that transparency automatically leads to positive governance outcomes, offering a more nuanced view of OGD's potential impact.

This research contributes to the field by introducing a conceptual framework that integrates public trust and bureaucratic accountability with OGD in emerging economies. By focusing on the intersection of these factors, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how transparency initiatives are received and perceived in contexts with varying levels of institutional capacity. The methodology, which combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches, allows for a robust analysis that accounts for the complexities of implementing OGD in diverse governance settings. The comparative analysis across countries also enriches the existing literature, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities unique to emerging economies and offering a balanced view of the potential and limitations of OGD as a tool for improving governance.

The limitations of this study include its focus on a relatively small sample size, which may not fully represent the diversity of governance structures and public attitudes in emerging economies globally. While the study includes multiple sectors and regions, the sample size of 5 countries, though purposeful, limits the ability to generalize the findings to a broader range of emerging economies with differing political, economic, and cultural contexts. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported data from surveys and interviews, which may be subject to biases, including social desirability bias and selective reporting. Future research should expand the sample size and include more countries from different regions, particularly those that are at varying stages of OGD implementation. Longitudinal studies could also offer insights into the long-term effects of OGD on public trust and bureaucratic accountability, tracking changes in these areas over time as governments refine their transparency initiatives.

Future research should also explore the role of digital literacy and access to technology in enhancing the impact of OGD. In many emerging economies, disparities in digital access and education could limit the effectiveness of transparency initiatives, especially when citizens lack the skills to interpret and use open data effectively. Investigating how to address these challenges and bridge the digital divide could significantly enhance the potential of OGD to foster public trust and improve governance outcomes. Additionally, exploring the ethical implications of OGD, particularly regarding privacy concerns and the potential for data misuse, should be a priority. As open data initiatives continue to expand, ensuring that data transparency does not inadvertently lead to the exclusion of vulnerable groups or the misuse of information will be essential for maximizing the ethical benefits of OGD in emerging economies.

## DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Grammarly to check for grammatical errors, punctuation, and sentence structure. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed the text for clarity and style, taking full responsibility for the content.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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