BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

The Role of Electronic Government Systems IN Enhancing Citizen Participation: Case Study of Mutare City Council.

By

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A dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in Partial Fulfilment of the Honours Degree in Peace and Governance

June, 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of electronic government systems in enhancing citizen participation within Mutare City Council, Zimbabwe. Despite the Council's implementation of various digital platforms, including a WhatsApp Chatbot, Council website, Facebook page, Ward WhatsApp Groups and email systems, citizen engagement remains persistently low, with many residents continuing to rely on traditional paper-based methods of communication. Employing a qualitative research methodology guided by an interpretivist philosophy, the study utilized a case study design and purposive sampling to gather data through semi-structured interviews with 20 participants and documentary analysis. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provided the theoretical framework for understanding user adoption behaviors. Findings reveal that while the platforms offer potential benefits including improved communication, enhanced access to information, and increased transparency for a minority of digitally literate users, their overall effectiveness is severely constrained by widespread lack of awareness, low digital literacy levels, high data costs and limited internet access, particularly in high-density suburbs. The study concludes that technological implementation alone is insufficient to foster meaningful democratic participation and recommends comprehensive awareness campaigns, community-based digital literacy training, provision of free public Wi-Fi and strengthened feedback mechanisms. This research contributes empirical evidence from a developing country context to the growing literature on e-government and participatory governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

DECLARATION FORM

I, Rumbidzai Mwashita (B224125B), hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research and study, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments and references included in the body of the paper and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

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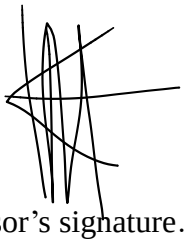

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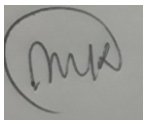

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to Almighty God, whose grace, strength and guidance have sustained me throughout this academic journey. Through every challenge and moment of uncertainty, His faithfulness has been my anchor.

To my beloved parents, whose unwavering love, sacrifices, and encouragement have been the foundation upon which all my achievements are built. Your belief in the power of education and your relentless support have inspired me to persevere and reach this milestone. This work is as much yours as it is mine.

To the residents of Mutare City, whose voices and experiences form the heart of this research, I dedicate this study with the sincere hope that it may contribute, in some small way, to more inclusive and responsive local governance.

Finally, to all who strive for transparency, accountability, and meaningful citizen participation in Zimbabwe's communities, may this work encourage continued efforts toward building a more engaged and empowered society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation. First and foremost, I extend my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, whose patient guidance, constructive feedback and scholarly insights have been invaluable throughout every stage of this research journey. Your mentorship has profoundly shaped both this work and my development as a researcher.

I am grateful to Mutare City Council for granting permission to conduct this study and to all the Council officials and residents who generously shared their time, experiences and perspectives during the interviews. This research would not have been possible without your willingness to participate and your honest contributions.

My heartfelt thanks go to my family and friends for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding during the many hours devoted to this endeavor. Your belief in me has been a constant source of motivation.

Finally, I acknowledge the academic community whose scholarship provided the foundation upon which this study is built. Any shortcomings in this work remain entirely my own.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

C2G	Citizen to Government
C.O.M	City of Mutare
G2B	Government to Business
G2C	Government to Citizen
G2G	Government to Government
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MCC	Mutare City Council
M-DATA	Mutare City Dialogue and Technology for Accountability
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model

LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Gender

Table 4.2 Platforms identified

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT....2
DECLARATION FORM....3
DEDICATION....4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....5
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS....6
LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES....7
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND....12
1.0 Background of the study....12
1.1 Purpose of the study....13
1.2 Problem statement....14
1.3 Objectives of the study....15
1.4 Research Questions.....15
1.5 Assumptions of the study....15
1.6 Significance of the study....15
1.7 Delimitation of the study....17
1.8 Limitations of the study....17
1.9 Definition of keywords....18
1.10 Dissertation Outline....18
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK.20
2.1 Introduction....20
2.2 Conceptualising E-Government....20
2.2.1 Understanding Citizen Participation....21
2.3 Roles of electronic systems....22
2.3.1Easy access to government information....22
2.3.2 Communication channels between the government and citizen....22
2.3.3 Public consultation and surveys....23
2.3.4 Online voting and e-consultation....24
2.4 Challenges of e-government platforms....24
2.4.1 Digital divide....24
2.4.2Ineadequate Awareness and digital literacy....25
2.4.3 Digital trust....26
2.4.4 Language barrier....27

2.4.5 Limited feedback loops....27
2.5Strategies adopted to improve the accessibility of e-government systems.....28
2.5.1 Use of multiple local languages....28
2.5.2 Introducing national digital literacy trainings....28
2.5.3 Simplifying and personalising electronic platforms....30
2.5.4 Strengthening cybersecurity and data protection frameworks....31
2.6 Theoretical Framework....32
2.7 Research Gap....33
2.8 Chapter Summary....34
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY....35
3.1 Introduction....35
3.2 Research Philosophy....35
3.3 Research Methodology....36
3.4 Research design....36
3.5 Population and Sample....37
3.5.1 Population....37
3.6 Sampling Methods....38
3.7 Data collection methods....39
3.7.1 Semi- structured Interviews....39
3.7.2 Documentary Data....39
3.8 Validity and Reliability....40
3.9 Data Presentation and Analyses....41
3.10 Pilot Testing....41
3.11 Ethical Considerations....42
3.12 Chapter Summary....42
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS....44
4.1. Introduction....44
4.3 Online platforms implemented by Mutare City Council....45
4.3.1 Level of awareness....47
4.4. The extent to which e-government platforms have improved citizen participation....48
4.4.1 Improves Communication Between Citizens and MCC....48
4.4.2 Enhance access to information....49

4.4.3 Improves Service Delivery 50
4.4.4 Transparency 51
4.4.5 Accountability 51
4.4.6 Levels of participation 52
4.4.1. Council Responsiveness to issues raised online 54
4.5. Challenges that limit the effectiveness of e-government systems 56
4.5.1 Lack of awareness 56
4.5.2 Low digital literacy 57
4.5.3 Limited access to internet 59
4.5.4 High cost of data 60
4.5.5 Resistance to change 60
4.6. Strategies to Improve the effectiveness of e-Government systems 61
4.6.1 Digital literacy Training 61
4.6.2 Awareness campaigns 62
4.6.3 The use SMS 64
4.6.4 Provision of free WI-FI 64
4.6.5 Strengthening Trust 65
4.7. Chapter Summary 65
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 67
5.1 Introduction 67
5.2 Summary 67
5.3 Conclusion 68
5.3.1 The online platforms that have been implemented by MCC 68
5.3.2 The extent to which e-government systems have improved participation in MC. 69
5.3.3 Challenges that limit the effectiveness of e-government systems in MC 69
5.3.4 Strategies that can improve the effectiveness of e-government system in MC 69
5.4 Recommendations 70
5.4.1 Improve awareness of E-government platforms. 70
5.4.2 Improving access to technology 70
5.4.3 Enhancing digital literacy among residents 71
5.4.4 Strengthening feedback mechanisms. 71
5.5 Area of further research 71

REFRENCES.....72
ANNEXURES 81

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Background of the study

Governments across the world have embraced electronic government systems as a means of improving citizen participation and service delivery. According to World Bank (2016), citizen participation is one of the fundamental elements that reflects good governance. In representative democracies, public input occurs through voting, consultations and civil society activism. However, these forms of participation have become ineffective due to factors such as limited access to information and lack of trust in public institutions, (OECD, 2024). E-government systems overcome these limitations by enabling more inclusive and interactive forms of communication between the government and citizens. Digital tools offer a platform for citizens to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes. According to UN (2022), e-government involves the use of ICTs to deliver services and it improves the interaction of citizens and government.

National and local governments have adopted digital platforms to provide services, disseminate information and engage citizens in decision making. According to United Nations (2022), e-government has promoted inclusiveness and citizen participation. United Nation E-Government Survey (2024), stated the e-government development have improved at a global level. However, electronic government system does not always allow everyone to participate in the decision-making processes. This is due to lack of facilities and knowledge on how to use the online platforms implemented by the government. According to Wirtz & Mounk (2019), the gap in accessing internet facilities has undermined citizen participation. According to Matimati & Rajah (2015), local governments in Africa have appreciated the electronic systems as an opportunity to provide and improve the relationship between them and citizens. African countries implemented e-government systems under the National e-government Strategy.

However, Ndou (2016), notes that implementation of ICT in Africa still faces challenges and these included limited digital literacy and poor infrastructure. Ramavhona & Mokwena (2016) also reiterates that rural areas in South Africa have lack of digital facilities and internet facilities. As such, this hinders the citizen participation because it leaves out some groups of people in the decision-making processes. According to Matimati & Rajah (2015), the use of e-government systems in developing countries is very low and many local authorities have not yet adapted to the initiatives.

Local governments in Zimbabwe acknowledged the importance of e-government systems which improves citizen participation. The National ICT Policy (2016), identifies the digital transformation as a critical driver of service delivery and citizen engagement. Mutare City Council introduced the Mutare City Dialogue and Technology for Accountability (M-DATA) project. It represents an early attempt to use mobile and digital tools to improve service delivery and citizen interactions with the council. According Muchanyuka & Fotsin (2017), the M-DATA is an SMS platform which allows citizens to report faults and make suggestions to the City Council. Its main objectives were to open a space for citizen participation in the local level and to improve communication between council and citizens, (Muchanyuka & Fotsin, 2017).

Therefore, the study sought to analyse the role of electronic government systems in enhancing citizen participation within Mutare City Council with the aim of identifying challenges, opportunities and strategies for improving digital civic engagement at a local level.

1.1 Purpose of the study

To examine how e-government platforms implemented by Mutare City Council have improved citizen participation.

1.2 Problem statement

The emerging of electronic government systems was intended to improve citizen participation in Mutare City. Fostin & Muchanyuka (2017), stated that the electronic tools will improve the participation of citizens in local authorities and they will transform public services. Although these systems have been introduced, participation in Mutare City Council still remains unclear and low. Many residents are still depending on traditional means. According to Muparadzi (2024), citizens are still using paper-based systems to make request and grievances. Therefore, there is minimal use of online platforms for civic consultation and policy feedback. This disconnects the intended purpose of e-government systems and their actual influence on citizen engagement. The high cost of internet facilities and digital devices exacerbates inequality in service access and citizen participation. So, these problems can lead to digital divide and these frameworks offer limited guidance on the adoption and deploying of digital platforms. According to Alrazooqi & De Silver (2010), only about forty percent of the world's population has access to the internet. So, these challenges have caused residents to continue using the manual methods instead of the e-government systems implemented by Mutare City. Residents are still abiding to the paper-based systems as a way of communicating with the Mutare City Council and this undermines the use of electronic systems to improve participation.

Therefore, this study sought to assess how the implementation of e-government platforms has influenced citizen engagement in Mutare City Council. The study also aims to identify the challenges that hinder effective utilization of these digital systems and to provide insights and recommendations for improving digital inclusivity and strengthening participatory governance in Mutare City.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The research has four objectives and these are:

I. To assess the extent to which the e-government platforms have improved citizen participation in local governance processes.
II. To identify the challenges that limits the effectiveness of e-government systems in enhancing citizen participation in Mutare City Council.
III. To identify strategies that can be adopted to improve the effectiveness electronic government systems in Mutare City.

1.4 Research Questions.

I. To what extent does e-government platforms improve citizen participation in local governance processes?
II. What are the challenges that are limiting the effectiveness of e-government in promoting citizen engagement in Mutare?
III. What strategies can be adopted to improve the effectiveness of e-government systems in Mutare City?

1.5 Assumptions of the study

I. It is assumed that the use of electronic platforms by Mutare City Council increases opportunities for citizens to participate in local governance processes.
II. It is also assumed that people who are digital literacy are likely to utilise e-government systems effectively and efficiently.

1.6 Significance of the study

Residents

This research helped the residents in Mutare town. It will help them to utilise electronic systems to communicate with the Council officials so that they will be involved in decision making and participate in the actives in Mutare. It will empower them to engage more effectively with the local authority. It will help them access services more efficiently and hold the Mutare city officials accountable. This will also strengthen their voice and improves responsiveness of governance to community needs. This will build trust and transparency.

Mutare City Council Officials

This research also helped the Mutare City Council officials to improve their internet facilities to residents and foster participation of citizens. It provided an insight on how digital tools can improve service delivery and communication with residents. The officials understood the impacts of e-government platforms which allowed them to design more responsive and allocate resources.

ICT Developers

The research also benefited ICT developers who sought to develop and design portal and websites that helped citizen to participate in decision making processes. This provided them an understanding of technological needs. It helped to identify challenges and opportunities for creating digital solutions that will facilitates inclusive governance. The ICT developers analysed how the residents and City Officials engage. They then design user-friendly applications and improved accessibility.

Civil Society Organisation

This study was also significant to the civil society. It provided an insight on how e-government platforms can strengthen participation and improvement of service delivery. This study helped to identify challenges that the community was facing and then sought to fill those gaps. They empowered marginalised groups and monitored governance processes effectively.

Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

This study also helped other local authorities in Zimbabwe. It provided knowledge on how ICT tools improved participation of citizens at a local level. They adopted best practices in implementing digital platforms for service delivery and participation. The study helped them identify challenges and solutions on how to mitigate them.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

This study is delimited to examining the role of electronic government systems in enhancing citizen participation within Mutare City Council only. It is excluding other municipalities in Zimbabwe. The focus is restricted to specific e-government platforms currently in use by the Council and does not cover informal social media interactions. Mutare City officials, ICT staff and residents with access to digital platforms are going to be included in the research sample. Simon, (2011) and Yin, (2018) stated that, the geographical and participant limitation allows for an in-depth, context-specific understanding of the phenomenon but may reduce the generalizability of findings to other cities. Furthermore, the study timeframe is confined to the most recent years, reflecting current developments in e-government adoption, (Creswell, 2018). The study only examined the citizen participation living other outcomes of e-government systems like cost-efficiency and reduction of corruption.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This study encounters several limitations which affects the scope of its findings. The reliance on self-reported data from citizens and officials is one of the limitations. This may cause response bias as participants might overstate their usage or positive perceptions of e-government systems as stated. The focus on Mutare City Council limits the study's

applicability to other municipalities with different technological infrastructures and socio-political contexts. The digital divide where some residents lack reliable internet access and digital literacy may exclude important voices from the study. Time and resource constraints inherent in undergraduate research further restrict the sample size and depth of data collection.

1.9 Definition of keywords

E-government: Heeks, (2006), defines e-government as the use of ICT to enable and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government services.

Citizen participation: Citizen participation is the process whereby individuals and communities engage in decision making and governance activities that affects their lives and society, (Arnstein, 1969).

Accountability: Bovens, (2007), stated that accountability refers to the obligation of individuals or institutions to explain, justify and take responsibility for their actions to stakeholders. Mulgan (2000), stated that accountability is that mechanism that hold decision makers answerable for their policies and conduct which promote ethical behaviour and prevents abuse of power.

Governance: Governance refers to the processes, structures and traditions through which power is exercised (Koopman,2003).

Transparency: According Hood (2006), transparency is the openness and accessibility of government processes and information which enables citizens and stakeholders to observe, understand and evaluate public actions and decisions.

1.10 Dissertation Outline

The dissertation will be structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background - This chapter will introduce the study by providing the background of the study, research problem, objectives, significance of the study and research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework - A thorough review of existing literature on the role of electronic government in enhancing citizen participation and democratic decision making.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design - This chapter will outline the research design, sampling methods, data collection techniques and analytical approach that are to be used when carrying out the research.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings - Presentation and analysis of the collected data will be conducted in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas for further Research - The final chapter will summarize the main findings, discussing the implications for policy, practice and recommending for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The literature review explores the academic discussions that are in existence regarding the electronic government systems and its contribution to increasing citizen participation. It critically examines the various concepts including e-government and participation based on theoretical and empirical research. The review discusses the promise of electronic platforms in enhancing transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in governance, but also identifies the obstacles that restrict their usefulness, especially in the context of developing countries. This chapter synthesises global and regional literature to establish some trends, contradictions and gaps in the existing literature and consequently offers a conceptual and empirical base of the current study and the justification of the need of further research in the Zimbabwean context.

2.2 Conceptualising E-Government

Heeks, (2006) notes that e-government is less about digitisation of services but more about inclusion in governance. This is backed by Fountain (2001) who mentions that the digital mediums help the citizens to access information and engage with the government institutions in a better manner. Also stated by Isabella &Ibrahim (2025) that e-government has been a big issue in most nations across the globe. According to Chadwick and Zheng (2020), e-government platforms have a number of mechanisms that support citizen engagement, which include online consultations, social media interactions and participatory budgeting portals. These tools enhance easy accessibility which encourage citizen participation and promote accountability. According to Norris and Reddick (2013), digital mechanisms enable citizens to be actively involved in the policy-making process, thus promoting democratic governance.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) emphasises that through data transparency efforts, e-government is capable of establishing trust in the institutions. Gil & Centador (2019) identified types of e-government services. These are government to citizenG2C, citizen to government (C2G), government to business(G2B) and government to government (G2G). E-government aims to provide variety of online information and e-services in an efficient and cost-effective manner. It strengthens the relationship between the citizen and the government. G2C allows citizens to access government documents that is legislation and regulations. It allows citizens to make transactions and bureaucratic task that is to change addresses and application for facilities. The Savings Bond Direct is an example of G2C initiative which was used to support the online selling of United States savings bonds directly to the public. Fung (2002) also mentioned that G2C provide momentum to put public services online and through the electronic services, they offer communication and information. Fung (2002), described Citizen to Government concept as the direct consumption of public services by the individual consumer for personal use. These services include licences and permit for driving and parking in town.

2.2.1 Understanding Citizen Participation

Callahan, (2007), stated that it is importance to include citizens in the decision-making process by the government and this promote participation between citizens and the government. According to Arnstein (1969), participation is a right and mechanism through which people can exercise agency in shaping the conditions that affect their lives. Participation is important as it strengthens governance, fostering inclusivity and enhance development outcomes. Pateman (1970), stated that participation is a central to democracy because it nurtures a sense of political effectiveness and civic responsibility. By allowing citizens to contribute to decision-making, participation builds legitimacy and trust between government and the

citizens. Citizens must be involved in policy making and this this make policy to be effective. According to Petty (1995), when stakeholders are involved in planning and implementation of policies, they will be responsive and sustainable. Citizens who are involved in decision making are more likely to support and monitor the implementations of policies and projects.

2.3 Roles of electronic systems

2.3.1 Easy access to government information

Amazihono & Watimena (2023) stated that with e-government systems, citizens will have easy access to relevant government information assisting in making informed decisions. With knowledge at hand, citizens might find it easier to participate in different matters that are happening in the city. One may feel reluctant to participate without adequate knowledge, hence with knowledge, citizen participation is enhanced. Citizens can participate with the knowledge of what is required of them and that that align with government regulations. In the US, Purcellville Online Engagement Platform was introduced and it enables citizens to access government information. Purcell (2017) highlights that the Purcellville Online Engagement Platform allowed the citizens to access public information easily and this enabled a broader participation by the citizens in making local decisions. This resulted in an increased feedback and civic participation as compared to previous engagements with the local community. This also helped underrepresented group's voice to be heard as there were also able to participate in the decision-making process. This shows are easy access to public information enable participants by the citizens as they will have the relevant information.

2.3.2 Communication channels between the government and citizen

E-Government platforms have enhanced the communication channels between the government and the citizens. These systems provide a platform where the government and

citizens interact with each other allowing citizens to participate from any location. With these electronic government systems, citizens can submit feedback or complaints online. Citizens can give feedback or complain on any decision that is made by the government. The government get to receive these complaints and feedback, take them into account and come up with a decision. This indicates that the voices of the citizens are considered (Isabella, Agustian, Baharuddin, & Ibrahim, 2025).

2.3.3 Public consultation and surveys

Citizens also participate in public consultation and surveys through the e-government platforms. There is an engagement between the government and citizens through emails, chatbot and social media. This is enhanced by e-government platforms which enhances citizens participation as they can now interact with government officials in policy making and decision making. Drigas & Koukianakis (2009) states that e-government systems have enhanced the communication channels between the government and citizens to encourage citizen participation. In South Africa, local authorities have developed mobile applications, that allow residents to report issues, access services and receive updates (Thinyane, Sieborger, & Reynell, 2015). An example is when a resident notes a burst pipe within the community, instead of travelling to the local authority's offices, the citizen logs in and reports the issue through the mobile application which will be responded immediately with the local authorities. This will enhance the participation of citizens through the e-government platform. Through mobile applications, e-government systems have improved responsiveness and transparency in local governance, citizens have become more engaged in policy feedback, service monitoring, and community development. These tools have also reduced traditional inefficiencies like long queues and lots of paperwork (Lev-On & Rosenberg, 2021).

2.3.4 Online voting and e-consultation

E-Government platforms have enhanced the participation of citizens through online voting and e-consultations. Some governments have implemented the e-voting for elections referenda and digital platforms for public consultations on policies and development plans. These tools make participation more convenient and inclusive to everyone, especially for marginalized communities as they can participate virtually (Tomkova, 2009). Kitsing (2011), mentioned that e-voting was used in Estonia which increased voter participation as citizens could vote from any place. In Canada, CitizenLab is used for online consultations and participatory policymaking (Simonofski, Hertoghe, Steegmans, Snoeck, & Wautelet, 2021). This involves different citizens in participating in different government processes. For example, the disabled are included in participating in different policy making process as they can access the process from the comfort of their home rather than travelling around for the consultations being made by the government.

2.4 Challenges of e-government platforms

2.4.1 Digital divide

As e-government platforms enhance citizen participation, there are some setbacks involved in enhancing citizen participation. According to Molobela (2023), digital divide affects municipals in South Africa. It worsened the unequal access to ICT infrastructure due to poor facilities that provide computers, internet and Wi-Fi connections. Masinde &Mkhonto (2019), also supported that the disparities in digital literacy and skills deprives some communities. That is, not all citizens have equal access to the internet and gadgets to use to access the internet. Oliveira & Garcia, (2019) mentioned that not all citizens have equal access to the e-government platforms as some of the citizens do not have access to the internet and some do not have the gadgets to use to access the internet. This excludes some citizen to

participate in decision making as they will not have access to the digital platforms. Heeks (2006), mentioned that while government improves citizen participation, unequal access to technology excludes rural and low-income citizens. Ordinary citizens without access to the internet, computers and smartphones face the challenge of being excluded from their municipality's decision-making processes. Molobela (2023), mentioned that, digital divide affects rural municipalities like that Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in Mpumalanga province. The municipality has limited ICT infrastructure and inadequate internet connection, computers and lacks other digital platforms designed to improve citizen engagement and participation. According to Mhlanga (2023), Zimbabwean Local Authorities faces inadequate infrastructure and limited funding and this hindered the main objectives of the electronic systems. Mangwanya (2025), supported that local governments across Zimbabwe operate within an ecosystem marked by serious infrastructure deficits. There is no reliable electricity, internet and inadequate data storage infrastructure. USAID (2023), mentioned that rural municipalities are particularly disadvantaged because they face frequent power outages, weak mobile networks and unaffordable or unavailability of internet services. Masinde & Mkhonto (2019), concluded that this problem leads to a reduced civic engagement causing limited participation in digital civic activities.

2.4.2 Ineadequate Awareness and digital literacy

Falco & Kleinhans (2018) states that, low awareness and engagement can limit e-government platforms in enhancing citizen participation. Many citizens are not aware of the e-government platforms at their disposal and may not have knowledge on how to use them. Verma, Sudeep & Ilavarasan,(2017) argued that most citizen may be unaware of the e-government platforms which are being utilised, hence the use of these platforms remain limited. In South Africa, citizens fail to give feedback to the municipality because they lacked

knowledge on how to use the mobile applications which were used for communication between the citizens and the municipality (Thinyane, Sieborger, & Reynell, 2015). Mobelela (2023), also noted that municipalities in South Arican lacks awareness and the knowledge on how to utilise the online platforms. He mentioned that many citizens in the City of Cape town lacked awareness when the GovChat platform was launched. Only few were aware of it and many citizens still needs training and education on electronic systems to improve their usage and improves public participation in municipal decision-making process as mentioned by Katzef (2022). Many municipalities in Zimbabwe and citizens continue to use manual systems as citizens will resist to change. According to Munyede & Mapuva (2019), many local government officials and citizen in Zimbabwe lack necessary technical competences to operate and manage digital systems. Resistance to change also hindered municipalities to embrace electronic systems in South Africa. Gananga &Phahlane (2024) stated that citizens under the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality stills uses the Imbizo face to face meetings and stakeholder consultations.

2.4.3 Digital trust

Citizens are reluctant to use the e-government systems due to trust and privacy concerns. Some citizens may not use the e-government system as they may feel that there are privacy concerns or may collect their personal information for other purposes (Smith, 2011). When citizens do not trust the use of e-government platforms by the government to enhance their participation, they will be ignorant to the use of these platforms hence limiting the participation of citizens. Citizens may fear investigations to why they responded in a certain way, data misuse for other purposes other than the agreed use, or lack of transparency on how the data is going to be used or if their opinions are being considered in the decision making.

This may discourage people from sharing opinions or engaging with the government through the e-government platforms (Belanger & Hiller, 2006).

2.4.4 Language barrier

E-Government platform limits citizen participation through language and accessibility barriers. Some e-government systems may not support multiple languages or accessible design for people with disabilities (Wing, 2005). Some of the citizens fail to understand and interpret then they will be left out in government decision making processes. A certain tribe, whose language or dialect is excluded from the platform may feel left out or not considered by the government and may resist to use these online platforms. In Indonesia, the government launched several e-government platforms which were in Bahasa Indonesia national language. However, there are several languages and dialects in Indonesia which are used by several civic groups, especially in the rural areas, who are not fluent in Bahasa Indonesia. This language barrier made it difficult for citizens to navigate and follow instructions of the e-government platforms which led to low adoption rates, missed deadlines and exclusion from important decision-making processes by the government (Fitriyanti, 2024). This limited the participation of citizens through the e-government systems.

2.4.5 Limited feedback loops

Another limitation to the enhancement of citizen participation through the e-government systems is limited feedback loops. Citizens may feel that their feedback is not being considered or taken into account which leads to demotivation and disengagement to participate in the decision-making process overtime (Yildiz, 2007). If citizens participate in the decision-making process through the e-government platforms but feel that the government does not consider their suggestions or their voices are not being heard, citizens may not participate

in the government decision-making process, hence limiting the e-government platform enhancing citizen participation.

2.5 Strategies adopted to improve the accessibility of e-government systems.

2.5.1 Use of multiple local languages

The e-government systems should also consider all dialects that are used within the community. This enables citizens to easily navigate the system if presented in an understandable language. The platforms should also include illustrations which makes it easier for citizens to understand the instructions and to read and understand what is needed of them so as to participate in any government activities through the e-government platforms (Fitriyanti, 2024). An example is e-government platforms in the United Kingdom, where all e-government platforms should comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA level, which ensures compatibility with screen readers, keyboard navigation and other assistive technologies. Audits are performed to test if the systems comply with the requirements and ensure that the information and instructions shared through the e-government platforms are written in simple English so that everyone will understand (Kuzma, 2010). All e-government platforms comply to the requirement which enhance citizen participation as all citizens will be included and be able to access the e-government platforms.

2.5.2 Introducing national digital literacy trainings

According to Ibrahim (2025), digital literacy became an important ability for citizens to function effectively in a technological connected society. It includes the understanding of how to use ICTs. It gives the ability to evaluate, understand and to use information efficiently. Digital literacy and outreach programs assist in enhancing citizen participation through e-government systems as mentioned by Ibrahim & Isabella (2025). Training workshops should

be conducted to educate citizens on how to use e-government platforms. Education plays an important role in improving digital literacy. Isabella &Ibrahim (2025), schools and educational institutions are responsible for providing adequate training and learning about digital literacy so that they become responsible for users of technology. Rural education in India is conducting e-education through the offering of Massive Online Open Courses. This scheme provides twenty hours of basic training on digital devices and internet, and how to use these tools to avail government. Nelson (2011) also stated that training and educational programs for adults is also important to ensure that all levels of society have equal access to digital literacy. Community centres provide access points which assist with personal devices or internet.

Public awareness campaigns must be held to promote the benefits and availability of e-services (Isabella, Agustian, Baharuddin, & Ibrahim, 2025). Training centres assist in educating citizens on how to use e-government systems. This makes it easier for everyone to use the e-government system if properly trained. Community centres also assist in enhancing the inclusion of all citizens the e-government platforms as they give citizens access to resources for the e-government systems. They may provide devices to use of free internet so that all citizens can participate through the e-government platforms. Conducting campaigns create awareness to citizens on the e-government systems that are at the citizen's disposal. For instance, banners can be used to inform citizens on an electronic system that is available in certain area and inform the citizen on how to access and navigate through the platform. Nelson (2011) concluded that with technological advances digital literacy is a key to reducing the digital divide which hinders the effectiveness of electronic systems

In 2010, Iceland launched Better Reykjavik, an e-government system which is an online civic engagement platform that allows citizens to propose ideas to improve the city, debate and vote and collaborate directly with the local government. The city partnered with different

groups which include schools, libraries and NGOs to offer training to citizens on how to use the new e-government system, Better Reykjavik. Campaigns were conducted to engage citizens including marginalised groups, elderly and immigrants on how to use the Better Reykjavik. This was done through the press, social media and community events. With the implementation of Better Reykjavik and the awareness program for the e-government system, Reykjavik city managed to implement over 700 proposals made by locals through Better Reykjavik. It also increased trust between the local government and the civil society (Lackaff, 2016).

2.5.3 Simplifying and personalising electronic platforms

To improve accessibility of e-government systems the government should ensure that the systems are simple in forms to fill and processes. This allows users to customise their dashboards so that they receive notifications in areas of interest and enables users to report issues or suggest improvements (Figueredo & Silva Santos, 2025). Complex forms to complete may discourage citizens in completing the forms for the government to gather information, hence these should be kept simple and understandable to prompt citizens in completing the forms and participate in government activities. Customisation of dashboards allow users to view areas of interest and areas there are comfortable in taking part in participation. This allows citizens to view areas they can participate other than overloading citizens with all government activities which may overwhelm citizens leading to citizen s ignoring areas they can take part in. After all the customisations are done, citizens should be able to give feedback and suggestions to the topic in discussion.

In the Philippines, they implemented an e-government platform called Caloocan City, a local government, ne-government platform for Caloocan City aimed at improving service delivery and citizen participation within the city of Caloocan. The system was designed in a simple manner grouping services into different categories for easy navigation, that is, permits,

complaints, health services among other categories (Miselo & Munyenyembe, 2025). Users can manage their dashboards ranking areas of interest in priority where the system learns what the user/citizen mainly visits and gives notification if any new issues are raised which may need citizens' concern or participation. The system also allows citizens to share complains about any issue they need to report (Valle, Bugayao, Gutierrez, & Malang, 2024). More citizens used the platform for service request and feedback, that is, the Caloocan City, e-government system enhanced citizen participation as it was easy to fill in forms and could customise user dashboards.

2.5.4 Strengthening cybersecurity and data protection frameworks

Citizen concern over e-government platforms is over the issue of data privacy and trust (Smith, 2011). To encourage user participation, e-government systems should address the issue on data privacy and trust. According to Isabella & Ibrahim (2025), with increasing cyber security threats, government must develop systems that are robust and resistant to cyber-attacks so as to protect sensitive data collected and stored in thee-government systems. The e-government platforms should allow secure logins allowing two factor authentication, to authenticate a user whenever they login into their profiles. This creates security and trust to citizens that no one can use their profiles and that their information is securely stored (Belk, Fidas, Germanakos, & Samaras, 2015).

The government should clearly state how the citizen's data is going to be used and stored to create transparency and they should share the decision-making process to create trust with citizens (Longzhi, Noe, & Neil, 2019). In Spain, Decidim was launched in Barcelona by the city council of Barcelona which allowed citizens in proposing policies, debate initiatives and vote on municipal decisions (Barandiaran, Calleja-López, Monterde, & Romero, 2024). Decidim was built on open source which allowed anyone to scrutinise its code and operations

creating transparency. With transparency, it instilled trust in citizens as it allowed independent audits of the system. The system strictly adheres to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which allow citizens to have control over their own data. That is, they have the right access, modify or delete their own records within the system. The system clearly states how data is collected, stored and used increasingly trust on how user data is being collected and used. Citizens report higher confidence in engaging with government digitally due to the platform's transparency and privacy safeguards (Esteves, 2025). With high confidence created, it helps higher citizen participation through e-government platforms.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) which is a framework used to understand user adoption of technology. According to Davis (1989), TAM posits that two primary factors influence individual use of new system that is perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using the system will improve their performance. Perceived ease of use which is the degree to which a person believes that using the system will be free from effort. These two perceptions shape a person's attitude towards using the technology. According to Davis (1989), in TAM, perceived usefulness influences the attitude towards using the system. That is if a person thinks that an e-government portal actually makes accessing services easier that person will have a positive attitude towards it. It also influences the behaviour to use the system that is if it's not fun to use it but if one believes it is useful then one will try using it and if the system is proven to be useful then regular use becomes a habit.

TAM can be very applicable to adoption of e-government in situations such as in Mutare City where people are at different stages of exposure to digital skills, their literacy level and

access to internet devices are inconsistent. The e-government platforms that the city has will be embraced by residents as long as they feel that it is useful and simple to use.

2.7 Research Gap

Although the literature on the electronic government systems and their possibility to enhance the participation of the citizens has been increasing, most of the available research is skewed towards the developed nations in Europe, North America and parts of Asia. The availability, adoption and technical efficiency of e-government platforms are primarily the subject of these studies, with the assumption that more people are able to access digital platforms, there will be an automatic increase in meaningful citizen engagement. It is concerned solely with short-term results such as platform adoption and does not take into account the long run consequences on engagement, societal norms, power dynamics and public trust. Literature acknowledges the exclusions based on infrastructure access, digital literacy and socio-economic disparities but it lacks empirical studies on interventions of hybrid approach or literacy programs to ensure equitable engagement especially for marginalised groups and in developing countries where AI-driven tools may perpetuate bias. There is limited empirical evidence from developing countries particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Zimbabwe on how e-government operates within different political, institutional and socio-economic contexts. This geographical and contextual imbalances in the literature creates a gap in understanding the real democratic outcomes of e-government initiatives in developing countries.

Furthermore, existing research tends to conceptualise participation in narrow terms. It emphasises on usage rate and online interactions while paying insufficient attention to the quality and impact of participation. There is limited scholarly which focus on whether citizen inputs submitted through electronic platforms are acknowledged, responded to and

meaningfully integrated into policy formulation and governance outcomes. Addressing these gaps is important to determine whether e-government systems genuinely enhance citizen participation or it creates a symbolic avenue for participation without substantive influence.

2.8 Chapter Summary

Chapter Two reviews the literature on electronic government systems and citizen participation. It imagines e-government as online sources that facilitate government-to-citizen communications and citizen engagement as inclusive engagement in governance procedures. The chapter discusses e-government roles such as access to better information, better channels of communication, consultations with the people and online voting. Some of the difficulties that have been noted include the digital divide, lack of digital literacy, lack of trust, language barrier and feedback loops. Improvement strategies include using multilingual platforms, being digitally literate, having simpler interfaces, and better cybersecurity models. The theoretical basic is the Technology Acceptance Model. The chapter ends by stating a research gap in regard to the democratic effects of e-government in the setting of developing countries.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlined the methods that were used when carrying out the research on the role of electronic systems in improving citizen participation. It explained the approaches and designs that were used to collect data in order to address the research questions and objectives. Due to the importance of the electronic systems in supporting transparency and inclusive governance, a reliable methodology is important to capture the experience of citizens within the local government context. This chapter described the targeted population and sampling techniques. It also outlined the data collection instruments and procedures that were used when carrying out the research. It also discussed the ethical consideration that were observed during the research processes.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a belief about the way in which data should be gathered. According to Gamage (2025), a research philosophy is a set of convictions and presumptions concerning the development of understanding. The researcher should examine their own questions and beliefs to explore and understand the research philosophy, (Gamage, 2025). It indicates how knowledge is generated, what counts as a valid knowledge and how reality is understood when carrying out research. Sharma (2024), also stated that research philosophy is the underlying belief system that influences how a person sees the world and engage with it. This research was guided by the interpretivism. According to Nickerson (2024), interpretivism is research that focusses on understanding how people make sense of their social world. It explores the experiences and perspectives that an individual holds. Interpretative researches on reality so they focus on human behaviours through empathy, dialogue and interpretation rather that measurement and experiments, (Nickerson 2024). It uses the qualitative research methods

that focus on individual's beliefs and reasoning. It believes that reality happens through social constructions, (Nickerson 2024). Interpretivism mainly focuses on interview, observations and document analyses. The interpretivism approach helped to understand citizen experiences participation through digital systems and how they interpreted government responsiveness and trust.

3.3 Research Methodology

Research methodology is the systematic approach to ways that were used when collecting, analysing and interpreting data when carrying out a study. The research adopted the qualitative research method to explore the in-depth on how electronic government systems influenced citizen participation. According to Cresswell (2014), qualitative research method is a means used to explore and understand individual or group perceptions towards a problem. Qualitative approach is important because it enables explanation of the subjective experiences. It provided a platform to understand how and why electronic government affected citizen participation. It also helped the researcher to understand and analyse the challenges they face using the electronic systems. According to Patton (2015), qualitative research is effective in evaluating because it captures the real experiences and conceptual factors that quantitative data might miss. Data was gathered through interviews. The researcher engaged with the Mutare City Council officials and the citizens in Mutare City. This helped to analyse the effectiveness of online platforms that are used by Mutare City Council to improve participation. This research also observed the citizens interaction with the government through online portals.

3.4 Research design

According to Khanday (2019), a research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by research to answer questions in a valid way. The research design determines the type of analyses research should carry out to get desired results. It provides an insight on how to

conduct research using a particular methodology. A research design facilitates the smooth scaling of various research operations, (Pandey 2015). This study adopted the case study design to examine the role of electronic government systems at Mutare City Council. A case study design helped to understand meanings, perceptions and experiences of both citizens and local government officials. It allowed an in-depth and context analyses of electronic government practices within a single local authority. Mutare City Council was selected as the case study because it has implemented various electronic platforms. These platforms aimed at improving communication, access to information and public engagement. Focussing on Mutare City Council only helped to capture detailed insights into institutional processes, challenges and opportunities associated with citizen participation through electronic tools.

3.5 Population and Sample

3.5.1 Population

According to Ahmad (2023), population refers to the entire group of individuals that share a common characteristic and are the focus of the study. It includes any individual who is involved in the research. Garg (2016), stated that population presents the complete set of elements that the research aims to study. In the study, the population included the residents of Mutare and Mutare City Council Officials.

3.5.2 Sample

According to Ahmad (2023), a sample refers to a subset of the population that is selected for study purposes. The sample represents a smaller and manageable group that the researcher uses to make inferences, (Ahmad 2023). It allows a study of smaller group while still making reasonable assumptions about the larger population. This study employed the non-probability that is the purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique whereby

participants are specifically chosen based on the relevance they are to the research issue. The study targeted about 20 participants. It included the residents of Mutare with experience on how to use electronic systems and Mutare City Council officials. The participants involved 15 residents and 5 Mutare City officials. The officials were public relations, ICT officers and ward councillors

3.6 Sampling Methods

Purposive or judgemental sampling relies on the researcher when choosing who to ask to participate, (Hickman 2013). This sampling was used to select people who will take part in the research. The researcher selected a representative to suit their needs or specifically approached individuals with certain characteristics. Memon et al (2025), mentioned that purposive sampling enables researcher to collect data that aligns closely with specific objectives. It ensures participants are chosen for their ability to provide rich and relevant data, (Patton, 2015). This approach enhanced the depth and quality of insights derived from interviews and focus groups. Purposive sampling helps researchers to explore issues by focussing on case that provide detailed insights as stated by Memon (2025). It improves the quality of research findings by including highly informative cases. These are essential for identifying patterns, (Ting 2025). Purposive sampling is considered appropriate because not all members of the population have direct experiences with electronic systems. The researcher selected participants who are actively involved in interacting with the council's electronic systems. This sample included the Mutare City Council officials responsible for implementation and management of these systems. By focussing on participants with information, purposive sampling allows the researcher to obtain in-depth insights on how e-government influenced participation.

3.7 Data collection methods

3.7.1 Semi- structured Interviews

This study used semi-structured interviews as a primary data collection method to explore the role of electronic government systems in improving citizen participation. Burgess (1984), referred semi-structured interview as a conversation with a purpose. The interviewer and respondents engaged in a formal interview and the interviewer used an interview guide. According to Robson (2011), semi-structured interviews provide qualitative data and create understating of the issue for both the research and the interviewee. This approach ensures that the key elements which are relevant to the research objectives are fully covered. It allows participants to freely express their views and experiences. According to Inglethorpe (2024), the semi-structured interviews provide a framework of predetermined open-minded questions while allowing the interviewer the freedom to explore responses un greater depth. While there is a question guide, interviewer can change the order of questions depending on how the conversation if flowing, (Inglethorpe, 2024). The use of semi-structured interviews is appropriate because it ensured understanding through participant's perceptions, interpretations and lived experiences. This enabled the researcher to gather in-depth insights from Mutare City Council officials and citizens.

3.7.2 Documentary Data

Documentary data was used as a secondary data collection method. According to Boslaugh (2007), secondary data is information that has been gathered and is under consideration to be reused for new questions. These are information obtained from existing written or digital documents that are relevant to the research topic. Bowen (2009), stated that these documents may be produced by government institutions, organisations and communities. This provides valuable evidence that supports the researcher in understanding the context of

the study. Documentary data complements primary data sources. Annual reports, council meeting minutes and resolutions, service delivery reports, ICT policies and guidelines, reports on digital projects and public participation frameworks can be used as secondary data. According to Yin (2018), documents are useful because they provide stable information that can be reviewed repeatedly. Documentary data is useful to examine how MCC communicates with citizens

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the research findings accurately represent the reality being studied. Ahmad (2021), stated that validity and reliability are among the most important and fundamental domains in the assessment of any measuring methodology for data collection. Validity is the core of any form of assessment that is trustworthy and accurate, (Bond, 2003). Messick (1989), also stated that validity is the degree to which empirical evidences and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions based on the test scores. Reliability is the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors, (Fraenkel, 2003). According to Messick (1989), a test is seen as reliable when it can be used by a number of different researchers under stable conditions. Triangulation is used to make sure that the researcher's study is reliable and valid. The researcher can confirm consistency across sources by comparing findings from semi-structured interviews with documentary data. This approach enhances validity by ensuring accurate representation and reliability by producing consistent findings across different data sources. The use of standardised interview guide also enhances validity and reliability. Validity is enhanced by ensuring data collected is relevant to the research objectives and reliability by maintaining consistency in data collection across participants. Clear documentation of research

procedures also makes the research reliable and valid. Maintaining detailed records of data collection and analyses procedures creates an audit trail.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analyses

Data presentation refers to the organisation of data that are usually presented in tables and figures with textual interpretation. According to Adekaitan, (2025), data analysis is the process of bringing order and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is the process of cleaning data and processing raw data and extracting actionable information. Qualitative data analysis is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomenon within their natural setting, (Adekaitan 2025). Thematic data presentation was used as data presentation. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method used to identify, organise and interpret patterns of meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was applied because it interprets the participant's experiences and perceptions. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the use of themes enables the study to systematically identify patterns and meanings from the data and it is consistent with qualitative research practice.

3.10 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing is a preliminary test or study conducted before a large-scale study, (Garnham, 2023). A pilot testing present key information that can help to guide the direction of the large research. It provides insights into the ultimate cost of the study, its overall feasibility and any challenges that the actual research may face once it gets of the study, (Garnham, 2023). It can provide more information and deeper insights into the future research. With pilot testing, the researcher learns more about the effectiveness of the methods and feasibility of gathering the information needed, (Garnham, 2023). Kathori (2004), also mentioned that pilot testing involves administering the data collection tools to a small group of participants. This is done

to identify potential weaknesses and improving the research designs. The interview guide was pilot tested to ensure that the questions are understandable and aligned with research objectives.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to protect the rights of everyone who is going to be involved in the research. In addition, everyone who participated was informed and ensured that they understood the purpose of the research. Their voluntary participation and right to withdraw at any time without penalty was considered, (Resnik, 2018). Confidentiality was maintained by securely storing data and removing personal information from reports and publications (Creswell, 2018). The research also got an approval from the university's ethics review board and also obtained permission from Mutare City Council before data collection begins. This in accordance with established protocols for research involving human subjects (Bryman, 2016). Special attention was given to avoid harm and discomfort to participants especially when discussing sensitive topics related to democratic governance and technology access.

3.12 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter outlined the research methodology employed in the examining the role of e-government systems in enhancing citizen participation. It discussed the research philosophy which underpinned the study. The interpretivism was chosen because it is sustainable in understanding participant's perceptions and experiences attached to the e-government initiatives. Validity, reliability and ethical consideration were addressed. It also explained the research design which were adopted to allow an in-depth exploration of e-government practices within real-time local government context. Data collection methods were detailed that is the semi-structure interviews as primary source and documentary analyses as

secondary source. Targeted population and sampling techniques highlighted the use of purposive sampling to sect information from Mutare City Officials and residents.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes data which was collected from the respondents during the research. it also interprets the data collected. It also aims to present the findings on the role of electronic government systems in citizen participation. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed 20 participants and these are 15 residents and 5 Mutare city officials. The researcher interviewed Public Relations Officers, ICT Officer and Ward Councilors. The findings are presented using tables, graphs and descriptive explanations.

4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

1. GENDER

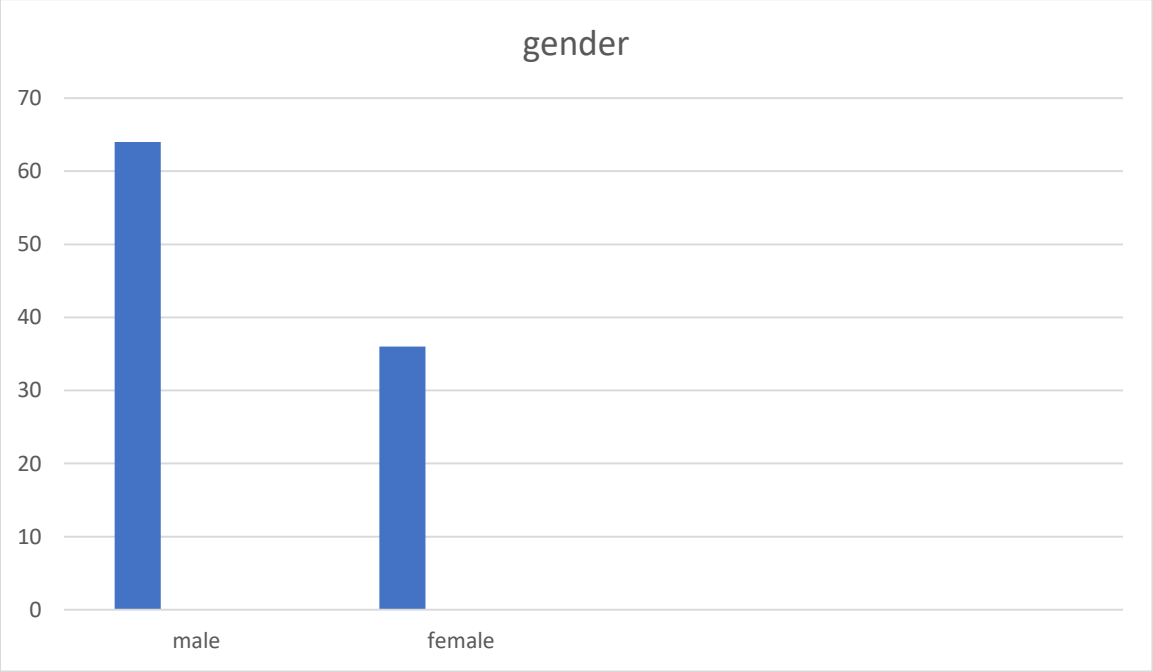

Figure 4.1. Gender

Men participated more than women when carrying out this research.

4.3 Online platforms implemented by Mutare City Council

Table 4.2. Platforms Identified

Platform	**Purpose**
WhatsApp Chatbot	Reporting faults Making suggestions
Council website	Information dissemination Announcements
Social media platforms (X, Facebook, TikTok)	Public announcements Community engagements
Ward WhatsApp Groups	Ward specific communication Reporting issues
Email system	Formal communication with council departments

The study wanted to find out the online platforms that are being used by MCC to communicate with residents and how these platforms help residents to participate in Council activities. Mutare city officials identified several platforms that they implemented so they will engage with citizens. They mentioned Council website, Facebook, X formally known as Twitter, Ward WhatsApp groups, WhatsApp chatbot and Email systems. The email is used to communicate with residents. Residents sends their issues through MCC email and this improves participation of participation. Council also make use of the social media platforms. They make use of content creators in MC and try to communicate with residents. TikTok

nowadays is now used with everyone, so MCC is also utilising it to pass information to the residents. The MCC uses Facebook to make public announcements. So, these platforms help citizens to participate in Council activities because there is a room for them to make decisions through online platforms. Council Officials stated that:

'The online platforms were designed to allow citizens to report faults, make suggestions and receive updates on council activities. We use the Chatbot which is directly linked to the management. If a resident sends a message to the chatbot, the message goes direct to the management group and they receive these messages directly from residents.'

Another Council Official stated that:

'We make use of the Diamond FM. There is a question-and-answer platforms which helps Council to jot down problems that are being faced by citizens. We send an individual who will be representing Council every Wednesday at 7:30. Residents will be calling and the Council will be responding to their issues.'

Another Council Official stated that:

'We use Facebook to send notice about budget meetings and when the Full Council is being held. We also send notice about vacancies and about the progress and developments City. This helps to improve accountability and transparency.'

Another Council Official also mentioned that:

'We use TikTok, we make use of content creators to communicate with residents. Since a lot of people are using TikTok, we found it easy for us to communicate with residents. Sometimes we use X, however, we do not use it regularly since a few people are aware of it.'

4.3.1 Level of awareness

The study also wanted to find out if citizens in Mutare were aware and if they were using the online platforms to make suggestions, report their issues and take part in the Council activities through online platforms. Participants were asked if they are aware of any online platform that the MCC uses to communicate with them. Participants indicated that they are aware of the online platforms although a large number of residents showed lack of knowledge of these platforms. Few participants showed that they are aware of the online platforms. A large number indicated that they are not aware of the online platforms. Those who are aware indicated that they are fully utilising it. Participant mentioned that:

'I am aware of the platforms that Mutare is using to communicate with residents and we also use them to communicate with them.'

Another Participant from Dangamvura mentioned that:

'I am aware of the WhatsApp ward group which was created by our Councillor and I have heard about the Chat Bot but I have not tried to use it though'

Another Participant from Sakubva mentioned that:

'I do not know anything about the online platform. When I face a challenge, will just go to the Council.'

Another Participant from Chikanga stated that:

'I am not aware of any platforms that is used by Mutare City Council'

Another participant said:

'I once heard about Facebook and Website but I have not used them.

From the findings, the residents in Mutare are actually unaware of the online platforms. Majority of residents does not engage with MCC through these platforms and this hinders their main objectives. A few are aware of the website and emails except for those who are literate. The findings also showed that, other residents are aware of the platform but they have never bothered to use them.

4.4. The extent to which e-government platforms have improved citizen participation

4.4.1 Improves Communication Between Citizens and MCC

The study wanted to indicate how introduction of electronic systems has improved participation in MCC. Participant indicated that electronic systems have improved communication between them and the Council. participants mentioned that they can now communicate with Council through online platforms without travelling to the Council. Participants mentioned that they use WhatsApp Chat bot to communicate with the Council. They send their issues through WhatsApp chat bot and Council website. Council Officials also mentioned that they receive issues from the citizens which helps them to address them. the systems help Council Officials to receive information on what is happening in the community and it helps to know if there are any problems in the community. This makes them address these problems. Participant mentioned that:

'I can now communicate with Council through WhatsApp chat bot instead of going to their offices.'

Another participant mentioned that:

'I can now send my messages anytime and get replies without travelling.'

Another Participant stated that:

'I used Council Website to report about bad road that were in our community and they managed to maintain them.'

The findings indicated that, electronic systems play an important role in improving communication between the Citizens and the MCC. This communication helps Council to identify issues that needs to be addressed. The findings indicates that Website and the WhatsApp Chat Bot are used for communication with the Council.

4.4.2 Enhance access to information

Participants indicated that the online platforms help them to access information about Council activities. Participants also mentioned that they get important information on the polices that Mutare City in implementing and they also get to know the projects that the Council is carrying out. They mentioned that the Council utilises Facebook make updates and announcements. Participant stated that:

'I now get updates and announcements on Facebook and can now get to know the projects that the Council is doing in City'

Another participant mentioned that:

'Mutare Council use Facebook to keep us informed of what is happening in the city and they keep us updated to whatever that is happening in the city.'

Another Participant supported the idea of receiving information through online platforms. He stated that:

'I received a notice of Mutare City Council about their budget Consultation meetings on Facebook Page. I also shared my views.'

The findings show that the online platforms enable citizens to know of whatever that the Council is doing in the city. The Council keep the Citizens posted to whatever they are doing. This helps Citizens to participate more in the Council activities and this helps the Citizens to have trust in the use of electronic systems.

4.4.3 Improves Service Delivery

Participants mentioned that the online platforms have improved service delivery since they will be communicating with the Council. Participants mentioned that they report issues like water shortages, road damages and waste management problems. The Council, then improves their service delivery to citizens. Council Officials also mentioned that through the WhatsApp Chat Bot they receive issues that the citizens are facing then they address the issues. Participant stated that:

'I use Mutare City Chat bot to report about the refuse collection and about the streetlights. There is no need for me to travel to the Council to file my complaint, I will just send a message from home'

Another Participant supported that Diamond FM programs that MCC hold every Wednesday allows them to report issues that they are facing in the City. She stated that:

'The show let us call Mutare City Council from home and report our problems. I once reported about the broken street lights and it was fixed.'

The findings showed that electronic systems play an important role in improving serving service delivery in C.O.M. they have increased efficiency and responsiveness in the provision of services and this transformed how residents interact with residents. Residents can now engage with the Council whenever any time and from any location.

4.4.4 Transparency

The researcher also asked the participants if online platforms have improved transparency through the use of online platforms. The participants responded in a positive way. They indicated that through the use of online platforms transparency increased though it a few are using them. Council post their progress online and they also mention them when reporting on Radio. They discuss these issues live on Radio and people will be questioning them and they will to answering. Council Official stated that:

'We keep residents informed about what the Council is doing in the C.O.M. through Diamond FM'

Another Council official mentioned that:

'We make sure that we post everything on Facebook making sure people notices what we are doing the city. We also post the suggestions that the Council is taking to resolve some issues that wants to be addressed.'

Residents also mentioned that:

'Yes, transparency increased through the use of online platforms because they post keep us informed on how they are using our funds.'

Another resident mentioned that mentioned that Council use the Facebook page to make their activities and decisions clear. The information they post are clear and they are easy to understand.

4.4.5 Accountability

Participants also mentioned that electronic helps the Council to explain their decisions and actions to the citizens. They mentioned that WhatsApp Chat bot provides traceable records of reports forcing the Council to respond quickly and reduce delays. Participants mentioned

that online platforms help them track their request and they also monitor progress. They also hold Council Officials responsible for the delays and poor service delivery. Participants mentioned this reduces corruption and manipulation as information will be publicly accessible.

Participant mentioned that:

'When I send an issue or complain on the Mutare Facebook page, they cannot deny that they did not receive it. It is now easy to hold the Council responsible for not responding since everything is recorded.'

Another participant stated that:

'If everyone in the City is complaining about the same issue, the Council is forced to act so that they address the issue.'

Council Official also mentioned that:

'The digital platforms increase accountability since there will be records of all complains and responses. These platforms also increase pressure for us to respond quickly because everyone will be watching.'

The findings indicated that electronic systems have improved accountability as the Council are held responsible if they fail to responds to the complaints of citizens. They also make them answerable to every action they are taking and if there are failures, they will be responsible and they should answer why they failed. The information is visible and traceable through the use of online platforms and this improves governance and trust.

4.4.6 Levels of participation

The study wanted to identify how have the e-government platforms enabled citizen to participate in Council activities. The participants were asked if participation has increased since

the introduction of electronic systems. Participants indicated mixed responses. Some mentioned that it has decreased, some it remained the same and some mentioned that it has increased. A number of residents were actually showing that they do not understand anything about the online platforms.

Those who supported that it has increased, mentioned that they send complaints to the Council through emails and websites. Participants indicated that they receive public notices and announcements through Facebook. Participant mentioned that:

'Participation has increased because I feel involved and informed to everything that is happening in the Council.'

Council Official stated that:

'*The introduction of digital platforms has increased participation in my ward. At first meeting attendance and feedbacks were very low but through the use of WhatsApp group I can reach 200 residents instantly. Residents can ask questions, raise concerns and submit their suggestions. This has made governance more inclusive.'*

A resident from Murambi also supported that participation has increased through online platforms. He stated that:

'Participation has increased because we can now report our issues online and make suggestion online. I send my objections on the proposed by-law online and they noticed it. I did not travel to the Council I just send my objection when I was at home.

Though other residents find e-government helpful, some mentioned that it has decreased their participation because they enjoyed attending meetings physically. Now that many meetings are announced online and some consultations are held online, they feel less connected. Participant from Sakubva stated that:

'Participation cannot increase when we do not know anything about what is happening in the Council and we do not receive information from Council.'

Another resident stated that:

'Even if the Council had introduced the platforms a few can access them. So, participation has not increased.'

Another stated that:

'I see no difference on the changes of participation after Council introduced these platforms'

From the findings, participation of citizens has not improved. The main goal of the online platforms is to improve participation of citizens in Mutare, but it has not improved due to lack of awareness. A lot of citizens are not aware of these platforms. The findings are similar to that of Mukabeta (2017), who mentioned that the public are not fully utilising the available technology to ensure maximum participation in government activities. This lack of public participation limits the level of communication between government and the general public Mukabeta (2017).

4.4.1. Council Responsiveness to issues raised online

The participants were asked if the Council response to the issues they have raised. The participants indicated that the Council's response is high because if they send their complaint their issue is addressed as soon as possible. A residents showed their post where he thanked the Council for addressing the issue of heavy trucks in the City. The Council Officials mentioned that they try their best to respond to the issues raised by residents. They also take the suggestions of residents into consideration. Mutare City Official stated that:

'We have an individual who is responsible for tracking the issues and suggestion raised by residents. We try to respond to their issues and we give them a reference number.'

Another stated that:

'If a resident uses the chat bot, the message is directly sent to the management group. Then the department that is responsible for that takes actions instantly.'

The participant indicated that the Council's responds to them is good. Residents were complaining about the road that is used by heavy trucks. That road was bad and people who had shops around the area complained about it and the Council addressed that issue. Participants mentioned that they complained to the Council through the WhatsApp Chat Bot. Participant stated that:

'I once posted a message to Council thanking them for addressing the issues of trucks which had troubled them for a long time.

Another Participant stated that:

'I once reported about a dangerous pothole and the Council did not take time to respond. So, their responding rate is quite impressing'

The findings indicated that MCC is actually responding to the residents who are using the online platforms. With this, participation is improved because residents will feel that the online platforms are useful so they have to use it.

4.5. Challenges that limit the effectiveness of e-government systems

4.5.1 Lack of awareness

From the findings, a large number of citizens are not aware of the platforms that have been implemented by Mutare City and this hinder their effectiveness. Inadequate awareness is one of the major challenges which was indicated by the findings. A lot of residents in Mutare especially those in high density are not aware of the e-government systems. They still rely on the traditional ways of reporting issues. They still visit the Council if they want to report issues only and if there are any programs that needs their attention, they will not be able to attend because they are not aware since Council uses e-platforms to communicate with residents. Therefore, inadequate awareness hinders the participation of citizens in Council activities. Residents showed that they are not aware of these platforms so the effectiveness is suppressed. Participant mentioned that:

'The main challenge is that a lot of citizens are not aware of the online platforms that Mutare City Council is using to communicate with residents'

Another Participant said:

'The use of Mutare City Website and the Email require knowledge on how to use the so people are failing to use them because they are not aware of how they can use these platforms'

Another participant mentioned that:

'The main challenge is that we do know about the online platforms. If we were aware we could have been using them to communicate with the Council.

Council Official mentioned that:

'Most residents are not aware of the platforms. But we try by all means to make sure that everyone is aware of them. Some residents do not care because they always think Council employees wants to gain from that.'

The finding clearly showed that low awareness if a critical challenge to the effectiveness of online platforms to improve citizen participation in MCC. These findings go in line with (Fungurai, 2019), who mentioned that, the majority of the residents in Mutare were not aware of the initiatives. The Council introduced and implemented the platforms whereas the Citizens are not aware of them. This lack of awareness explains why participation remains low. Council officials mentioned that citizens still rely on manual communication methods due to unfamiliarity with digital platforms. The align with broader African e-government challenges, where digital divide and limited public outreach hinder platform adoption., Ndou (2016).

4.5.2 Low digital literacy

Participants also mentioned digital illiteracy as another challenge that hinders the effectiveness of electronic systems. A few percentage that is aware of electronic systems, fails to access these platforms because they lack digital literacy. They mentioned that they struggle to use these platforms so they will rely on the traditional ways of reporting their issues to the Council. They cannot use the Website because they do not know how it works. Participant mentioned that:

'The Website is not easy to use; I do not know where to click whenever I want to report a problem'

Another participant stated that:

'I do not have knowledge on how to use the website, so I prefer to visit the Council'

Another participant mentioned that:

'Even if I go on the website, the information is not clear and sometimes the pages do not load properly'

Council Official stated that:

'We did awareness campaigns but they are not enough. When we launched the new website, we posted on Facebook page and put up posters in council offices. Even if we did that residents still fails to use these platforms so we need to go in the community to show people how to use these platforms.'

Another Council Official stated that:

'Digital literacy is a challenge especially in high density communities. Citizens are not aware of any platforms that we use to communicate with them. A few percent might have heard about it but they are not interested because they are used to the old ways of communicating with Council.'

The participants also mentioned also mentioned that digital divide can hinder the effectiveness of electronic systems. The findings also indicated that those in the low density are the ones who tries to use the online platforms other than those in the high and medium density. Participants also mentioned that old aged people also failed to utilise the electronic systems. Participant mentioned that:

'In our high-density community, most people are not aware of e-government platforms, even if we wanted to try, the digital skills are not there unlike those in low-density'

The findings showed inadequate digital literacy hinder the effectiveness of electronic government systems. Most of the Citizens in Mutare does not know how to use the online platforms. This may be caused by the lack of ability of them or they do not have interest in these platforms. According to Verma (2017), the effectiveness of e-platforms is limited when the citizens are failing to use platforms that are being used. Inadequate awareness and digital literacy are the major factors which hinders the effectiveness of electronic government systems. Mangwanya (2025), also mentioned that low level of digital literacy affects the effectiveness of e-government in local government in Zimbabwe.

4.5.3 Limited access to internet

Participants were asked the challenges they face when trying to access the electronic platforms. The findings revealed that limited access to internet and high cost of mobile data are significant challenges that residents face when trying to use the online platforms. Most participants indicated that they are unable to access online platforms due to financial constraints. Participant mentioned that:

'I cannot afford to buy data every now and then, so it becomes very difficult for me to access information and make decisions online.'

Another participant mentioned that:

'I encounter network challenges whenever I want to use the platforms.'

Another mentioned that:

The Council uses English when notifying people about the Budget Consultation meetings. So, it becomes very difficult for me to understand.'

From the research Wi-Fi connection and internet hinders the effectiveness of the platforms. When there is no network connection, it becomes very difficult for residents to

participate. This is in line with Molobela (2023), who mentioned that citizens without access to internet are likely not to take part in the Council activities.

4.5.4 High cost of data

Participants also mentioned that mobile data is expensive so it becomes so hard for them that they can participate through online platforms. Many participants indicated that for them to access the Council website, Facebook page and emails, they require mobile data which they cannot afford especially those from lo-income households. Participants mentioned that mentioned that:

'Mobile data is expensive for me to keep using Facebook, I cannot keep checking Council updates online'

Another Participant also mentioned that:

'I would want to use the Council website more but I cannot buy data every time, so I will end up reporting my issues physically.'

The research showed that high cost of data limits the citizens to engage with the Council. Therefore, the low-income groups are being excluded from participating and this creates digital divide where only those who can afford data will be benefitting from e-government. Heeks (2006), also mentioned that low-income citizens are excluded from participating in decision making.

4.5.5 Resistance to change

The findings showed that resistance to change is another challenge that is affecting the full utilisation of electronic systems. People still want to use the traditional way of communicating with the Council. Citizens still wants to report their issues physically.

Resistance to change slows down the transition to digital governance and this affects their effectiveness. Participants mentioned that:

'It is easier for me to explain my issues physically than online. I also get immediate answers if I go to the Council than sending a message what if they fail to respond'

Council Official mentioned that:

'Even if we introduced an easy way to communicate with us, residents still rely on the traditional way. They are failing to adapt to the new ways'

Participants also have trust issues towards these platforms and this affects the effectiveness of online platforms. Participants mentioned that if they report their issues online, they are scared that their information will be used for political purposes. Participants also mentioned that they are also hesitant to use these platforms because they do not know who is on the other side so they would prefer to use the traditional ways of communicating with the Council.

Participant stated that:

'I prefer reporting issues in person because online systems do not feel secure'

4.6. Strategies to Improve the effectiveness of e-Government systems

4.6.1 Digital literacy Training

The researcher asked participants to suggest strategies that can improve the effectiveness of electronic government. Participants suggested that enhancing digital literacy

can improve participation of citizens. Council has to go into communities and teach citizens how to use the importance these platforms. Participant stated that:

'Council should set up free community workshops for everyone in the community for training. This can be done in Moffat, Queens and any school'

Another participant stated that:

'Many of us do not know how to use the Council's platforms, so training would help us understand how to access services.'

Council official stated that:

'Introducing digital literacy campaigns in communities will improve citizens to engage with online systems.'

The findings indicated that limited digital literacy hinders the ability of citizen to communicate with the Council using the online platforms. The citizens need to be trained on how to use the WhatsApp chat bot, Emails and the Website. Residents showed that even the online platforms exist, many citizens lack the knowledge and confidence on how to use them. This is supported by Nelson (2011), who mentioned that educational programs ensure that everyone in the society have equal access to digital literacy.

4.6.2 Awareness campaigns

Participants also mentioned adequate awarenesses has to be done so as to improve digital literacy. This helps them to be aware of the e-government systems since the majority of citizens are not aware of these platforms. Participants also mention that the Mutare City has to educate them on how to use these platforms, only a few knows how to use the e-government systems. Participant stated that:

'We are not fully aware of the online platforms of the online platforms that were introduced by Mutare City Council, so more awareness campaigns would help us to understand how to participate using them.'

Another participant mentioned that:

'Since Mutare City Council uses the Diamond FM every Wednesday, they must use that chance to advertise and educate people how to use the platforms.

Council Official mentioned that:

'The Council acknowledges that low awareness is a challenge and we need to strengthen our awareness campaigns so that we can reach more residents.'

For the e-government systems to be effective the citizen must be educated so that they will be able to use these platforms and also, they get to know that there is a better way to communicate with council other that traveling to the Council to report their issues or to submit their suggestions. This also helps to encounter resistance from citizens. The Council Officials suggested to go in high density communities to introduce these platforms to residents so that everyone in the city get to know about these platforms and this involves citizens in Council activities. Council Official stated that:

'We need to improve awareness especially in high-densities. We will contact workshops and shows in high-densities so they know what the online platforms are and how to use them.'

The research indicated that for e-government to be effective, citizens need to be educated on how to use the platforms. According to Ibrahim (2025), digital literacy is important because it give citizens the ability to function effectively in a technological connected society. The Council has to conduct educational initiatives that helps citizens to understand the online

platforms. Mutare city introduced e-government systems but on a few are aware of them. This is supported by Mangwanya (2025), who mentioned that development of a national digital strategy that improves participation of citizens in policy making.

4.6.3 The use SMS

Participants also mentioned that MCC must use other channels that does not require data or internet to use them. If these are implemented participants mentioned that participation will be improved since they will have access to information and be able to communicate with Council with no cost. Participants mentioned the use of SMS can be better because they are cheap. Participant mentioned that:

'*SMS can be cheap to use. Mutare City must also implement platforms that uses texts message. We can afford text not data bundles'*

4.6.4 Provision of free WI-FI

Participants also mentioned that if the Council provide free data, they will utilise the online platforms. The council has to use introduce public Wi-Fi hotspots in communities. This would allow low-income households to participate in Council's activities. Participant mentioned that:

'Data is too expensive, but if the Council provide it for free then we will use the website and email to report our issues'

Another participant also supported the idea and He stated that:

'Providing free data will make it easier for us to access information'

The research indicated that participants are failing to participate due to high data cost. For them to participate more, participants suggested that Council should provide free Wi-Fi.

They should find places in the Communities where they will install Wi-Fi and this helps citizens to utilise platforms and this avoid the physical way of reporting issues to the Council.

4.6.5 Strengthening Trust

The research also indicated that strengthening of trust by Council can improve the use of online platforms by Citizens. The research indicated that participants are also not using the platforms because they do not trust if the Council will respond them. The study indicated that trust can be improved by constant responses by MCC. Participants suggested that Council has to reply their issues regularly. Participant suggested that:

'If the Council should make sure that they respond to our suggestions and complains. This makes us trust that they are actually seeing our complains.'

Another participant also mentioned that:

'*Consistency in response will make us believe in the online platforms'*

The research indicated that if trust is improved the citizens will utilise the online platforms. They will see that the Council can actually reply to their suggestions and complaints. Those who are resistant will see that they are actually helpful then they will utilising them.

4.7. Chapter Summary

The chapter presented, analysed and discussed the findings of the study on the role of electronic government systems in improving participation of Citizens in Mutare City. The research indicated that Mutare City Council has implemented e-government systems and these are WhatsApp Chat Bot, Council Website, Facebook, WhatsApp Ward Groups and Email system. This research also indicated that the awareness and usage of these platforms is very low and this hinders the main objective of the online platforms which is to improve citizen

participation. The findings indicated the challenges that is affecting e-government to improve participation. These include lake of awareness, inadequate digital literacy and high cost of data. The research showed that improving digital literacy and improving awareness can mitigate these challenges and this can improve citizen participation in Mutare City Council.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the major findings of the research and provide conclusion based on research objectives. it provides recommendations and it suggest areas of further research on the citizen participation and e-government systems.

5.2 Summary

This study was divided into 5 chapter. Chapter one provided the background of the research and presented the problem statement which focusses on the low level of participation despite the introduction of electronic systems in Mutare City. It also outlined the research objectives, research questions significance of the study and limitations of the study. It highlighted the assumptions and delimitations of the study. It also provided a definition of key terms to clarify key words. It focused on the Technological Acceptance theory as the theory which underpin the study.

Chapter two focusses on reviewing the theoretical framework and literature review. It reviewed literature which was relevant to the electronic government systems and citizen participation. The literature mainly focused on the objectives of the study which are to identify the online platforms, to assess the extent to which e-government platforms have improved participation, to identify challenges that limits the effectiveness of e-government and to identify strategies that can be adopted to improve the effectiveness of e-government systems. It also provides the research gap of the study.

Chapter three outlined the research philosophy which is the underlining belief that influences how a person sees the world and engage with it. It also outlined the research

methodology and research design which were used in the research. The study adopted the qualitative research method, using the semi-structured interviews and documentary data to collect data. Sampling methods and how data was presented were also described in this chapter. It also focused on the ethics which were considered when carrying out the research. the reliability and validity of the study were also mentioned to ensure the credibility of the research.

Chapter four presented data of the findings and analyzed the data collected. The findings indicated that Mutare City introduced e-government to improve communication between residents and the Council. However, the findings indicated that there are low levels of awareness and digital literacy among residents and this affects the utilization of the e-government systems in Mutare City. Strategies to improve participation through e-government were also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five contains the summary of the major findings of the research and indicates the conclusion based on the research objectives. It provides the recommendation for the study and area of further research.

5.3 Conclusion

The conclusion is mainly focusing on the objectives of the study.

5.3.1 The online platforms that have been implemented by MCC

The study confirms that MCC implemented several platforms to communicate with citizens and facilitated participation of citizens in decision making purposes. These platforms include the WhatsApp chat bot, WhatsApp Ward Groups, Facebook, Email system, Diamond FM live streams and Council Website. These platforms provide channels through which citizens can access information and interact with the Council. However, despite their existence,

their potential has not been fully recognized due to limited usage by residents. The research indicated that a lot of residents in MC are not utilizing these platforms due to lack of awareness.

5.3.2 The extent to which e-government systems have improved participation in MC.

The research concludes that e-government systems have not significantly transformed participation because a large number of citizens are not yet actively engaged. The findings showed that a few people use the online platforms and the rest still rely on the manual way of communicating with the Council. Munyede &Mapuva (2019), mentioned that many people prefer manual systems that enable discretion and, in some cases, it fosters corruption through unclear procedures. While some citizens use the platforms to communicate with the council, the overall level of participation remains low.

5.3.3 Challenges that limit the effectiveness of e-government systems in MC

The study concludes that the lack of awareness and low levels of digital literacy are the major challenges that are affecting the effectiveness of e-government systems that were implemented MCC. The study also showed that high cost of data, limited to access to internet, resistance to change and trust issues also hinders the effectiveness of electronic systems According to United Nations E-Survey (2012), stated that the key challenge for e-government development of Africa remains the wide spread lack of functional literacy and most countries remain at the tail of the digital divide. Lack of trust and feedback loops also hinders the effectiveness of e-government systems in MC

5.3.4 Strategies that can improve the effectiveness of e-government system in MC

The research established that improving the effectiveness of e-government requires multi-faceted approaches. Improving digital literacy and enhance awareness can improve the full utilization of electronic platforms. This can be done through public campaigns and conduct

training programs. Strengthening of Council responsiveness to citizen's concerns improve participation of citizens in decision making in C.O.M.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the effectiveness of e-government systems in enhancing citizen participation in MCC.

5.4.1 Improve awareness of E-government platforms.

MCC should increase public awareness campaigns on the existence and purpose of the electronic systems. This can be done through radios announcements. MCC must make use of the Diamond FM to educate people on the importance of using electronic systems. They should also use the Manica Post to increase awareness to citizens in C.O.M. The MCC can make use of the bill boards and posters to notify people and raise awareness on these platforms. MCC can also make use of Road Shows to inform people about these channels and this can improve the utilization of electronic systems.

5.4.2 Improving access to technology

MCC should make efforts to improve access to affordable internet especially for those who are from low-income households. The Council should introduce community technology hub. These hubs must have Wi-Fi that can be used by citizens and also there should be laptops that can be used by residents and there should be also trained stuffs. These hubs must provide training sessions to improve digital literacy.

5.4.3 Enhancing digital literacy among residents

The MCC must partner with NGOS, Educational institution and telecommunication providers to conduct digital literacy training programs targeting different age groups. These NGOs includes Plan International which runs a Digital Skills 4 Youth project targeting young people and FACT Zimbabwe that also manages the Digital Skills for Youth Mutare Hub. By partnering with these NGOS, Council will be able to improve digital Literacy among residents. They should focus on how to access Council services, submit complaints and suggestions online. These programs help young people to utilize e-government platforms. Training can be done through mobile outreach vans, community and local libraries to reach peri-urban and low-income areas.

5.4.4 Strengthening feedback mechanisms.

The study recommends MCC to improves their feedback mechanisms on its platforms to improve participation. They should ensure timely responses to citizen inputs. MCC should introduce automated responses. When a residents submit their suggestion or complain they should receive a confirmation message indicating that their concern has been received. This makes residents to continue using the online platforms because their issues are being responded to and this build trust.

5.5 Area of further research

The study focused on the role of electronic government systems in enhancing citizen participation. However, this research requires further investigation. Further research should focus on the impact of electronic government on service delivery in rural areas. This study mainly focused for those in town so researchers must also look in the impact of e-government in rural areas

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ANNEXURES

Appendix 1: interview Questions

Interview questions for residents

To identify the online platforms that have been implemented by Mutare City

1. Are you aware of any online platforms that are used by MCC to communicate with residents?.....

   .....

   .....

2. Which specific online platforms of MCC do you know about?.....

   .....

   .....

3. Have you ever used any of MCC's online platforms? If yes, which ones?.....

   .....

   .....

To assess the extent to which the e-government platforms have improved citizen participation

1. In what ways have these e-government platforms enabled you to participate in council activities?.....

   .....

   .....

2. In which ways do these platforms help you to stay informed about council programs, policies or public

meetings?.....

.....

.....

3. Did your level of participation increased, decrease or it remains the same after the introduction of these e-government platforms?.....

.....

.....

4. Does City Council responds to issues raised through e-government platforms?.....

.....

.....

5. Do you think these platforms have improved transparency and accountability in MCC?.....

.....

.....

.....

To identify the challenges that limits the effectiveness of e-government systems in improving citizen participation in MCC

1. Have you ever experienced any difficulties when using MCC's online platforms?.....

.....

2. What challenges do you face when trying to access these e-government platforms?.....

.....

.....

3. In your opinion, what are the main barriers that prevents effective citizen participation through these systems?.....

.....

.....

.....

To identify strategies that can be adopted to improve the effectiveness of electronic government systems in MCC

1. What improvements would you suggest for MCC's online platforms?.....

.....

.....

2. How can MCC encourage more residents to use e-government platforms?.....……

……

……..

3. What can be done to make these online platforms easier to use?.....

.....

.....

4. How can MCC improve communication with residents through digital platforms?.....

.....

.....

5. What should be done to ensure that residents receive feedback after submitting complaints or suggestions?.....

   .....

   .....

INTERVIEW QUESTION FOR MCC OFFICIAL

1. Which electronic government systems that are currently used by Mutare City Council?
2. How do electronic systems help residents to participate in Council activities?
3. Do residents use online platforms to give feedback or raise complaints?
4. What challenges does Mutare City Council face in implementing government system?
5. What strategies can improve the effectiveness of electronic government systems?

Rumbidzai Mwashita

Rumbidzai Mwashita Draft

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Appendix 2: Permission letter

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Bindura University of Science Education
P.Bag 1020
Bindura
Zimbabwe
Tel+263-66216229
DR J. KUREBWA
+263772121563
jkurebwa@buse.ac.zw

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE

09 March 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, MWASHITA RUMBIDZAI Student Registration Number B224125B who is a HBSC PEACE AND GOVERNANCE student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where possible, conduct interviews as part of a data collection process.

Yours respectfully

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE
CHAIRPERSON
11 MAR 2026
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
PRIVATE BAG 1020, BINDURA, ZIMBABWE

J.Kurebwa (DR)
Chairperson

Appendix 3: Student's Permission letter

Rumbidzai Mwashita

Bindura University of Science Education

10 March 2026

The Town Clerk

Mutare City Council

P.O. Box 910

Mutare

Zimbabwe

072779

CITY OF MUTARE
TC ENQUIRIES
16 MAR 2026
P.O. BOX 910, MUTARE
TEL 02020 - 64412

MAYOR
CHAMBER SEC
CE
FD
DHS
DHCS
ICTM
HRM ✓
CIA
PRO
TCs EA
REGISTRY
CCAO
CSO
CFO
LO

Hrm

14/3/2026

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT MUTARE CITY COUNCIL

I am Rumbidzai Mwashita, a student at Bindura University of Science Education, currently pursuing a Peace and Governance. As part of the requirements for the completion of my studies, I am conducting a research project titled, The Role of Electronic Government Systems in Enhancing Citizen Participation, A Case Study of Mutare City Council.

The purpose of this study is to examine how electronic government systems are being used by Mutare City Council to promote citizen participation in local governance. The research also aims to identify the challenges affecting the effectiveness of these systems and to propose strategies that may improve citizen engagement through digital platforms.

I kindly request permission to collect data from officials and residents associated with Mutare City Council through interviews. The information collected will be used strictly for academic purposes. I would like to assure you that all information provided will be treated with confidentiality and respondents will remain anonymous unless permission is granted otherwise.

Your cooperation and support in granting me permission to conduct this research will be greatly appreciated and will contribute significantly to the successful completion of my study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Rumbidzai Mwashita

[B224125B]

[0771761455]

Appendix4

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE
TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

CITY OF MUTARE

CIVIC CENTRE NO.1 QUEENS WAY
P.O.BOX 910, MUTARE, ZIMBABWE
GENERAL LINE : +263202064412
DIRECT LINE :+262202060271
EXT: 309/331

OUR REF: MN/mm EMAIL: mnhongo@mutarecity.org.zw

TOWN CLERKS DEPARTMENT

Our Ref: MN/mm 17 March 2026

RUMBIDZAI MWASHITA
Bindura University of Science Education
P.O Bag 1020
BINDURA

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Your letter dated 10 March 2026 on the above matter refers.

I wish to advise that you have been granted permission to carry out a research titled, **"The role of electronic government systems in enhancing citizen participation. A case of Mutare City Council.**

Could you please therefore liaise with the Town Clerk on the above matter.

Yours faithfully,

K.B CHAFESUKA
TOWN CLERK

THE TOWN CLERK
CITY OF MUTARE
18 MAR 2026
P. O. BOX 910, MUTARE
TEL: 020 - 64412