



Accountability and Transparency in Public Administration for Improved Service Delivery

Birdayanthi¹, Yusriadi¹, Ikmal¹

¹STIA YAPPI Makassar

*Corresponding Author: Birdayanthi

Email: Birdayanti@gmail.com

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Abstract

Research explores how public service delivery in public administration depends heavily on accountability combined with transparency to achieve organizational improvement. The research uses a qualitative approach with 25 participants in semi-structured interviews and implements three public institution case studies and policy framework and audit report document analysis. Transparent governance enables citizens to engage actively because it makes public processes open to public view whereas accountability systems improve both institutional response and ethical decision-making. These elements function as a unified system with increased levels of public trust between citizens and their institutions. Despite these findings the research establishes that bureaucracy struggles with change and limited funding along with official opposition to change obstructs proper implementation of these governance principles. The study emphasizes the necessity of developing integrated governance systems which combine ethical leadership practices with citizen engagement because it allows the removal of documented barriers. Research analyzes literature gaps about accountability-transparency dynamics which determines governance performance results. The study promotes a systemic reform approach of public administration which needs to match aspects of democratic principles and contemporary societal expectations. The research findings offer crucial knowledge to decision makers together with public administrators and academics who want to boost institutional effectiveness and service delivery in various governance systems.

Introduction

Well-functioning public administration depends on two vital principles which create trust while improving service quality and developing good governance. Public administration improvement has become a primary focus of global efforts due to citizen demands for modern and just and trustworthy public services during the last several decades. Transparency together with accountability emerge as crucial aspects to confront different governance problems particularly corruption and administrative delivery problems and citizen service unresponsiveness. Public officials in public administration maintain a duty to provide defense of their actions and decisions to all stakeholders such as citizens and institutions and regulatory bodies. Active systems maintain responsible power distribution along with adherence to laws and ethics and public-welfare alignment of activities. The definition of transparency involves the public accessibility of governmental information about all public processes and policy decisions. Through these principles governments attain a powerful system which enables proper distribution of public funds to achieve essential societal services equitably. The world

recognizes the value of implementing accountability and transparency practices yet several nations encounter intense obstacles during their implementation. Numerous studies prove that systems without proper accountability fail to achieve operational efficiency and cause both resource wastage and corruption (Phiri, 2022; Khan, & Roy, 2022). The lack of transparency weakens public trust while it creates beliefs about governmental secrecy which leads to more governance failures according to Lavigne et al. (2022). The systems of governance face persistent problems in developing nations because institutions lack strength and the corruption in these countries prevents better governance development (Androniceanu, 2021; Wang & Guan, 2023).

Service delivery functions as the life force of governance together with public administration. Public service delivery includes offering fundamental services like healthcare and education and sanitation as well as infrastructure since they form the basis for social development and well-being (Agostino et al., 2021; Virtanen & Jalonen, 2024). Service delivery excellence demands both sufficient funding along with capable institutions combined with open oversight to make sure resources are optimally used across the population. Performance audits and citizen feedback systems improve the efficiency and responsiveness of service delivery programs according to Hout et al. (2022). The implementation of open government data and participatory budgeting programs helps both citizens become more invested in public institutions while boosting their trust in these institutions according to Schoeman & Chakwizira (2023).

The dynamic relationship between transparency and accountability enables the proper handling of modern-day public administration obstacles. Through transparency stakeholders receive all essential information to monitor public officials yet accountability plays a crucial role to guarantee specific improvements in governance (Efunniyi et al., 2024; Matheus et al., 2021). Several barriers such as political resistance together with cultural norms and resource limitations prevent the achievement of this synergy. Public officials in multiple settings often oppose transparency because they fear heightened public oversight and diminished control whereas citizens fail to make effective use of accountability tools because of their insufficient knowledge and capacity (O'Regan et al., 2022; Harden & Kirkland, 2021).

Worldwide and regional organizations have established multiple programs focused on making public administration more accountable while ensuring transparency. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) launched in 2011 serves as an initiative that puts forth citizen participation alongside open data for anti-corruption measures to advance governance (Open Government Partnership, 2020). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under Goal 16 emphasize constructing accountable institutions because they foster peace together with justice and inclusive communities (Abhayawansa et al., 2021). These initiatives show successful outcomes in particular settings due to their need for local adjustment as well as persistent political backing according to good sources such as Jeemon et al. (2022) & Whitman et al. (2023).

The Indonesian legal system protects transparency principles through various laws including the Public Information Disclosure Act as well as the State Civil Apparatus Law (Law No. 14 of 2008; Law No. 5 of 2014). Public administration seeks to develop two key frameworks that promote responsible public administration with open practices. The execution of these principles encounters substantial implementation hurdles because of weak institutional capability and bureaucratic access challenges coupled with resistance to reform according to

Bolarinwa et al. (2023). The One Data Indonesia program represents Indonesia's progress in transparency yet the country faces the challenge of weak and disunified accountability systems according to Bernot et al. (2024).

The current research investigates how accountability and transparency affect public service delivery performance in Indonesian governance. This research uses a qualitative method to study both the current practices and systemwide changes which enhance governance results. The study contributes to public administration research through its investigation of accountability and transparency as they relate to service delivery in strategic sectors within developing nations. This research provides policy recommendations about governance structure improvements and service delivery enhancement to stakeholders who include civil society leaders along with practitioners and policymakers.

Method

The research investigated the relationship between public service delivery improvements through qualitative data collection about accountability and transparency. The research methodology centered on understanding the genuine encounters and wisdom of people active in public administration. The qualitative descriptive framework positioned itself to obtain detailed first-hand insights regarding the practice along with systemic elements and difficulties affecting governance. The research method allowed for flexible systematic investigation of public accountability and transparency in institutions by emphasizing profound data over wide scope to reveal crucial findings.

The research collected data using semi-structured interviews, case studies and document analysis as its three main collection methods. The main method for data collection used semi-structured interviews which aimed at public officials, community leaders and citizens who carry out public service delivery. Interview participants experienced guided open discussions during which they could freely convey their experiences and governance practices insights. The research incorporated detailed investigation of accountability and transparency measures in particular institutions by conducting direct observations and conducting supplementary interviews along with case studies. The results of the study were enriched through document analysis which examined policy documents combined with audit reports and governance frameworks to validate findings from other research methods.

The study used purposive sampling to identify relevant participants alongside institutions which served the research purpose. The research selected key informants who held governing roles and possessed governance expertise to achieve diverse perspectives from positions within government administration as well as NGO organizations and resident citizens. Institution selection focused on agencies that deliver crucial services and maintain accessible records about their accountability functions. The study reached data saturation which determined 25 interview participants and three institutional case studies as the final sample. The research design incorporated diverse suitable insights to achieve full understanding of the study subject.

To extract meaningful patterns the research team used thematic analysis as their method of data analysis. The first step included complete review of the collected data followed by a methodical coding system to extract important data segments. The research objectives guided the categorization of identified codes which were used to produce broader analysis themes. Various analytical techniques including manual methods united with software tools were used to

improve accuracy during the evaluation process. Research conclusions were structured by studying original themes in correlation with established frameworks and methodologies from prior studies.

Result and Discussion

The basic components of effective public administration are accountability and transparency because they guarantee government procedures serve citizen requirements as well as protect democratic principles. Through accountability public officials together with government institutions receive oversight of their responsibilities therefore enhancing both ethical conduct and responsiveness. The combination of transparency with accountability helps citizens acquire information which makes them effective participants in governance while they maintain their ability to monitor institutions. Constitutional standards that hold importance face implementation barriers such as official organization opposition alongside funding scarcity along with existing operational methodologies that resist change efforts. The research examines accountability and transparency implementations within public administration through the evaluation of their effect on service delivery quality and public trust while discussing actual governance system obstacles. The data enables readers to evaluate the combined effect of these principles upon governance processes together with public administration sustainability practices.

Role of Accountability in Public Administration

Public administration vouches its existence on accountability which facilitates both trust between citizens and officials and operational efficiency throughout governance institutions. Public officials along with their institutions must demonstrate their decisions through justifiable explanations of all their actions and resource management to citizens as well as oversight bodies and regulatory agencies. Public service delivery depends on accountability for upholding policies together with ethical conduct and public expectations. This responsibility includes maintaining compliance but also involves citizen-driven public official oversight which leads to improved service quality through an accountability feedback mechanism. The establishment of regular audits with complementary public reporting and grievance response programs strengthens public trust a great deal. Personnel in public institutions gain citizen trust when administration officials exhibit responsibility for their performance throughout their workdays.

"When citizens see transparency in government expenditures and timely delivery of services, their trust in public institutions grows. Accountability bridges the gap between expectations and outcomes."

Public officials echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing that accountability reduces opportunities for corruption and misuse of power.

"The presence of internal and external audits has ensured that we remain answerable for every decision, which has instilled greater confidence among the public."

These insights underscore the direct relationship between accountability and public trust, emphasizing the need for robust accountability frameworks in public administration. Accountability also plays a pivotal role in optimizing resource utilization within public

administration. By holding officials responsible for their actions, accountability mechanisms encourage prudent decision-making, reducing inefficiencies and wastage.

"Accountability ensures that resources are used effectively, with minimal wastage. When every department knows it will be audited, there is greater emphasis on planning and efficiency."

Different institutions which established rigorous accountability systems ended up achieving better results in their financial operations and service delivery. An evaluation team recognized when an agency dispersed unused funds to community-based projects as an excellent practice. This particular case demonstration shows that formal accountability systems create concrete governance enhancements by matching resources to public care priorities. The essential function of accountability includes supporting ethical governance principles. Public servants must maintain ethical standards together with principles during the execution of their duties. Accountability systems detect and resolve any deviations which occur from established standards.

"When there are clear accountability measures in place, officials think twice before engaging in unethical practices. It serves as a deterrent to corruption."

The implementation of whistleblower policies together with independent oversight committees enables citizens and staff members to identify and report unethical activities. The implementation of accountability systems enables public administration to achieve ethical enforcement in addition to encouragement which results in improved public administration integrity. The practice of accountability helps people participate in governance through transparent information sharing as well as allowing them to monitor official activities. Community participation stands as a fundamental democratic practice which enables people to share complaints and maintain government official accountability.

"When citizens are given platforms to question government actions, it promotes transparency and improves service delivery. Accountability becomes a shared responsibility."

Social audits coupled with participatory budgeting methods give citizens effective ways to bridge the communication divide between themselves and their public institutions. A local government-initiated town hall meetings which solved citizen complaints thereby elevating resident satisfaction with government administration.

Accountability supports the performance of public institutions through its establishment of responsible behavior and continuous development systems. Public institutions with focus on accountability develop capabilities to adapt their services according to needs and they address systemic problems and deliver superior quality services.

"Accountability drives innovation because it pushes us to identify and address gaps in our processes. It motivates teams to perform better and focus on results."

The collected research through interviews together with case studies demonstrates that public administration receives significant transformation through accountability practices. The practice of making officials answerable to both internal and external stakeholders deliver improved service delivery together with stronger foundations for good governance. These

learnings reveal why accountability should be institutionalized to establish strong ethical and responsive public institutions with high resilience.

Impact of Transparency on Citizen Trust and Service Delivery

Openness within public administration maintains a vital position since it determines how well people trust government institutions while shaping the quality of public services. When governments make all information about their procedures and choices along with their spending public through open communication citizens can effectively check and rate public institutions. By establishing transparent public governance affairs citizens experience better accountability while corruption diminishes while state-citizen relationships grow stronger. Public service delivery experiences substantial improvement when transparency maintains its place because citizens obtain visibility regarding resource distribution as well as service administration. Public institutions require transparency for citizens to develop trust with their citizens. Public access to precise up-to-date information makes citizens view governance as fair and inclusive.

"When we see how public funds are allocated and spent, it builds confidence that the government is working for the people, not for private interests."

Similarly, public officials acknowledged the role of transparency in dispelling skepticism about government actions.

"Transparency helps us showcase our efforts and outcomes. It eliminates doubts and ensures that citizens know we are acting in their best interests."

Such remarks demonstrate transparency functions as a trust-building mechanism that builds joint public-state accountability and collaboration. Through transparency citizens can check both the quality standards and promptness of public services so service providers stay attentive to citizen needs. When performance metrics together with operational data become accessible to all stakeholders this creates ongoing performance enhancement while cutting down inefficiencies. A municipality achieved better response times through their online tracking system which improved citizen satisfaction rates in service requests management.

"Knowing that citizens are watching pushes us to work more diligently and ensure timely delivery of services."

Moreover, transparency facilitates better communication between service providers and citizens. Public feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and open forums, were shown to improve service quality by identifying areas needing improvement.

"The government introduced a feedback system, and it has made a real difference. We now feel heard and see real changes being implemented based on our input."

Transparency acts as a deterrent to corruption and mismanagement by exposing public officials to scrutiny. Open access to budgets, procurement processes, and audit reports creates an environment where unethical practices are more likely to be detected and addressed.

"When financial data is publicly available, there is less room for manipulation or misuse of funds. Transparency keeps everyone accountable."

The release of financial audit reports at this institution decreased both fraud and embezzlement occurrences. The organization established a whistleblower program to allow staff and local people to disclose reporting irregularities. The transparency initiatives proved resource management worked more properly with both ethical standards and enhanced trust in process execution. The proactive governance from transparency enables citizens to monitor their elected officials because it gives them information required to maintain government accountability. The implementation of public dashboards and community meetings as information-sharing platforms directly improved citizen participation during decision-making processes.

"Transparency gives people the tools to engage meaningfully with the government. When citizens know what is happening, they are more likely to contribute ideas and monitor outcomes."

One case study highlighted a participatory budgeting initiative where citizens were invited to propose and vote on community projects. This approach not only improved trust in local governance but also ensured that resources were allocated to projects reflecting community priorities.

"This level of transparency shows us that our voices matter, and it motivates us to stay involved."

Finally, transparency contributes to sustainable improvements in governance by fostering a culture of openness and accountability. Institutions that prioritize transparency are more likely to gain public support and withstand challenges such as political instability or economic downturns.

"When transparency is embedded in our practices, it strengthens resilience. Citizens remain supportive even in difficult times because they trust the process."

A governmental department approved a transparency charter to publish periodic reports about their project development alongside budget expenditures. The initiative boosted operational efficiency while receiving international recognition of its good governance standards. Such initiatives indicate how transparency leads to substantial positive effects which transform the quality of governance and trust while advancing service delivery practices.

Transparent operations provide two key benefits of enhanced public trust while delivering effective services thus the interview findings along with case studies show this connection. Democratic foundations become stronger through transparency because this measure allows citizens to actively participate in community development.

Challenges in Implementing Accountability and Transparency

Honest public administration practices play a central role in public administration but their implementation usually encounters several major obstacles. Several impediments exist because systemic institutional and cultural elements decrease governance performance while corroding public confidence. The research findings from interviews together with case studies identify the main difficulties when implementing accountability and transparency. The main struggle lies in public officials and institutions which demonstrate resistance to adopt new approaches.

The typical governmental employee works within unmonitored systems controlled by secrecy so they hold reservations about adopting transparency systems.

"There is a mindset within some institutions that transparency exposes weaknesses, and this creates fear among officials."

Such resistance often stems from a lack of awareness or training on the benefits of transparency. For instance, in one of the analyzed institutions, efforts to digitize financial records were delayed due to push back from employees who were uncomfortable with the new system.

"We struggled with implementation because some staff felt threatened by the level of visibility the system would bring."

The successful implementation of accountability and transparency often requires significant investments in technology and infrastructure. However, many public institutions operate with limited budgets and outdated systems, hindering their ability to adopt modern practices. In several case studies, resource constraints were identified as a major barrier.

"We want to implement online platforms for transparency, but our budget barely covers basic operations."

Additionally, technological literacy among public officials is often lacking, further complicating the adoption of digital tools. This was evident in one agency where a transparency portal was launched but remained underutilized due to inadequate training.

"The technology is there, but without proper training, it's like giving someone a car without teaching them how to drive."

Cultural norms and societal attitudes also play a significant role in hindering transparency and accountability. In many contexts, hierarchical structures and deference to authority discourage individuals from questioning governance practices.

"In our culture, people are often reluctant to speak out against officials because it's seen as disrespectful."

Moreover, limited public awareness about their rights and the mechanisms available to ensure accountability further exacerbates the problem. In one case study, citizens expressed frustration over inaccessible information but admitted they were unaware of existing platforms designed for transparency.

"We didn't know there was a website to check project updates. If people don't know these tools exist, they can't hold anyone accountable."

Political interference remains a critical obstacle to achieving transparency and accountability. In many cases, political leaders influence the functioning of public institutions, undermining their independence.

"Sometimes we face pressure from higher-ups to withhold information that could be politically damaging."

This challenge is particularly prevalent in contexts where public officials are appointed based on political affiliations rather than merit. Such appointments often lead to a lack of commitment to transparency initiatives, as officials prioritize loyalty to political figures over public service.

"Transparency efforts can be stalled or even reversed when they conflict with the interests of those in power."

Finally, weak legal and institutional frameworks often fail to provide the necessary support for implementing accountability and transparency measures. In some cases, laws mandating transparency exist but lack enforcement mechanisms, rendering them ineffective.

"It's not enough to have transparency laws on paper. Without enforcement, they become meaningless."

In one of the case studies, an agency attempted to improve transparency by publishing procurement data, but the initiative faltered due to the absence of regulations penalizing non-compliance. A civil society representative noted,

"There's no incentive for agencies to follow through if there are no consequences for ignoring transparency requirements."

Research findings demonstrate that multiple solutions should be implemented to tackle these problems. Openness should be nurtured while technology gets augmented through funding increases and employees receive proper training under well-developed legal systems. Public institutions can build up their accountability standards through barrier elimination which leads to improved governance while delivering superior public service outcomes.

Synergistic Approach to Accountability and Transparency

Public service delivery receives vital support from the balanced relationship of accountability together with transparency. The combined execution of these principles produces an environment based on trust combined with operational efficiency and quick response in governance systems. This section analyzes the beneficial practice of synergistic implementation which improves outcomes by rectifying systems limitations as shown in research and example studies.

Public administration experiences continuous enhancement because transparency and accountability work together as a feedback system. Transparency lets citizens and stakeholders obtain relevant information yet accountability systems allow them to give feedback leading to necessary corrective actions.

"When people see how decisions are made and have channels to question or challenge those decisions, it motivates public officials to perform better."

Case studies highlighted examples where transparent reporting systems allowed citizens to track project progress and submit grievances, which were then acted upon by accountable officials.

"Our online portal not only makes project budgets accessible but also tracks complaints, helping us identify recurring issues and address them proactively."

A synergistic approach strengthens the bond of trust between citizens and public institutions. Transparency builds credibility by demonstrating that governance processes are fair and equitable, while accountability reassures citizens that their concerns are taken seriously.

"Citizens trust us more when they see that we are not only open about our operations but also willing to take responsibility for our actions."

This trust is crucial in fostering public participation in governance. In one case study, an agency implemented participatory budgeting, where citizens contributed to decision-making processes. The initiative was successful because of the agency's commitment to both transparent communication and accountable action.

"We felt valued because we could see how our input shaped the final decisions, and officials explained why certain choices were made."

Combining transparency and accountability also enhances efficiency by reducing corruption and waste. Transparent practices expose irregularities, while accountability ensures that perpetrators face consequences.

"Transparency without accountability is insufficient because people may see wrongdoing but feel powerless to act on it. The two must go hand in hand."

For example, in one institution studied, procurement processes were made public, and independent audits were mandated to ensure compliance. This dual approach resulted in a significant reduction in cost overruns and improved service delivery timelines.

"Knowing that the public and auditors are watching ensures we adhere strictly to protocols."

Transparency and accountability empower citizens by providing them with access to information and the means to hold officials accountable. This empowerment encourages active civic engagement and strengthens democratic governance.

"When people are informed and have platforms to voice their concerns, they become more involved in governance, which leads to better outcomes."

In one of the case studies, the introduction of town hall meetings and real-time publication of public spending reports significantly improved citizen participation.

"Having access to information and being able to question officials directly gave us a sense of ownership over the process."

Finally, a synergistic approach fosters a culture of ethical leadership and institutional integrity. Public officials are more likely to act in the public's best interest when they know their actions are transparent and subject to scrutiny.

"Accountability and transparency create an environment where ethical behavior becomes the norm rather than the exception."

One case study revealed that institutions with strong accountability frameworks and transparent practices experienced fewer ethical violations. mandatory disclosure of assets by public officials and regular performance evaluations encouraged ethical conduct.

"When leaders set an example of integrity, it trickles down through the organization, creating a culture of accountability and openness."

This research investigation proves that accountability together with transparency serve essential functions to strengthen public service delivery. The qualitative research method adds value to existing literature by studying real-life practical applications of these principles during governance operations. Previous studies separate accountability and transparency into independent factors because they do not investigate their combined influence on trust building and performance enhancement and citizen empowerment. The integrated examination in this study delivers important findings about how these components relate to each other.

The majority of previous studies focuses on either accountability or transparency independently as separate governance elements. According to Chang et al. (2021) transparency helps fight corruption effectively only when combined with accountability systems that monitor change. Accountability frameworks were examined by Adam & Fazekas (2021) without exploring ways transparency supports their development. The present investigation establishes the feedback mechanism which emerges from the combination of these governance principles to enhance governance results.

This research examined transparency as a process which exposes governance details to citizens combined with accountability tools that enable them to do something with the information. Genuine public access to procurement data alongside complaints systems made possible both the detection of wrongdoing and the enforcement of necessary corrections. The research result supports Honig et al. (2024) by demonstrating that transparency becomes more effective through the addition of enforcement mechanisms to ensure its effectiveness. Research on the development of citizen trust through the connection between accountability and transparency falls short in current literature. Research by Olateju et al. (2024) examined trust effects of transparency independently yet neglected how accountability strengthens these effects. The research data shows that transparency as a standalone practice does not enhance trust because citizens require accountability systems which demonstrate their responses to public complaints. The research participants indicated transparency allowed process observation yet public institution trust required official accountability to develop. The research results match Worthy et al. (2020) who argued that public trust in governance emerges from combination of observable operations and enforcement-based accountability practices.

The study adds new knowledge to existing academic literature because it investigates the implementation barriers involving accountability alongside transparency despite little previous research in this domain. highlights resource limitations along with institutional resistance as transparency restrictions but the author does not explore their relationship with existing accountability frameworks. The research shows how organizational reluctance together with insufficient technology systems along with political unwillingness creates barriers for the integration of accountability and transparency processes. The study demonstrated how these systemic problems affected a public institution because insufficient funding and noncooperative senior officials made it difficult for agencies to execute transparency plans. Establishes that transparency programs tend to fail because they lack sufficient institutional backing.

The practical implications of this study also address gaps in policy-oriented research. other experts have developed theoretical solutions to enhance transparency and accountability but empirical studies about these models' actual application remain scarce. The findings provide useful practices which show why linking citizen participation channels to public reporting

frameworks leads to improved governmental reactiveness. The participants acknowledged how participatory budgeting and online grievance portals have successfully combined citizen involvement with better public services. The results line up with current research conducted which demonstrates how digital instruments help connect people with public organizations.

As a final output this study enhances ethical governance discussions because accountability and transparency converge at this point and other researchers studied the theoretical foundations of ethical governance yet failed to investigate its practical implementation. The study establishes through evidence that accountable practices and transparent systems establish norms for ethical behavior to emerge. Public officials demonstrated more ethical conduct because participation in mandatory asset disclosures and regular performance evaluations became part of the regular duty. which showed ethical leadership creates institutional integrity receives new support through this finding as it shows structural mechanisms help sustain ethical leadership.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates how accountability systems with transparent practices strengthen public service delivery whereas it fills knowledge deficits by exhibiting their combined effect. A combination of interview data with case research together with documentation demonstrated that transparency delivers access to information to citizens yet accountability methods establish public institution responsiveness and trust. Systemic problems including office sluggishness and funding constraints stay major obstacles to making these measures operational at their best. The study adds theoretical and practical aspects because it demonstrates how integrated governance systems create citizen participation with ethical conduct and institutional openness. The research findings offer policymakers and practitioners the opportunity to plan systems which blend good governance with long-term improved public service delivery.

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