



Original Article

Public Understanding of E-Government Transparency and Accountability and its Influence on Public Participation in Corruption Prevention

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Abstract:

Corruption cases in Indonesia are considered extraordinary crimes because they can impact many things. Corruption can have an impact on the country's economy, the welfare of citizens, the fulfillment of human rights, and access to the basic needs of citizens. The government has made various efforts such as transparency and accountability in state financial management which is useful for public funds. One way is through E Government. Ironically, the number of corruption cases has never disappeared. In order to effectively eradicate corruption, it is necessary to provide the widest possible space for public participation as control or supervision of government administration in the management of public funds. In order for supervision to be effective, the public needs to first clearly understand the concepts of accountability and transparency. The aim of this research is to determine the public's understanding of e-government accountability and transparency and its influence on public participation as supervisors of public funds managed by the government. This research is quantitative research. The results of this research can provide input in efforts to prevent corruption in Indonesia. The research results show that there is a relationship between public understanding of transparency and accountability and public participation in corruption prevention.

Keywords: corruption, e-government, transparency, accountability, public participation

Introduction

From January to October 2022, the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK)) received 335 complaints of alleged corruption cases that occurred in West Java. Most corruption cases originate from the procurement of government goods and services. According to the Deputy Chair of the Corruption Eradication Committee, Johanis Tanak, this large number of complaints occurred because corruption prevention activities were still low in West Java. This is also shown by the low achievement of the 2021 regional head integrity assessment (Survei Penilaian Integritas (SPI)) survey. The SPI value in West Java is only 69.89 percent and is still below the national value which reached 72.4 percent ([Alhamidi, 2022](#)). There are seven indicators



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in the SPI assessment, namely procurement of goods and services, integrity in carrying out tasks, budget management, transparency, trading in influence, human resource management, and anti-corruption outreach. A low SPI value indicates an increased risk of corruption in institutions or regional governments. Based on KPK's data between 2008 - 2022 also shows that there are 21 regional heads in West Java who have been convicted as a result of cases of procurement of goods and services. This corruption case is related to the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) which will have an impact on development activities. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out joint supervision ([Alhamidi, 2022](#)). According to Minister of Communication and Information Budi Arie, SPI results published to the public can create awareness of the risk of corruption in ministries or institutions as well as regional governments. Apart from that, it is hoped that the SPI results can also improve systems that can prevent corruption ([Sucipto, 2023](#)).

The government has attempted to improve integrity by reforming the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy has great authority in all aspects of community life, therefore the role of the bureaucracy is more prominent as a policy maker rather than a policy implementer, which means it is more about controlling than serving the community. Government bureaucracy should be managed based on the principles of good governance. With bureaucratic reform, it is hoped that services to the community can be fairer and more equitable, so that the bureaucracy can serve the interests of the community in a transparent and accountable manner, thereby preventing corrupt practices ([Imtihany, 2021](#)). Even though it has been in motion since 2 decades ago through Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2010 concerning the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2024 which aims to create a world-class bureaucracy by 2025, this policy has not succeeded in being realized. This goal has not been achieved because the bureaucratic reform paradigm still focuses on internal changes in the bureaucracy so that it has not been able to provide improvements in public services, has not been integrated and coordinated between government institutions and there is low stakeholder involvement in planning and evaluating bureaucratic reform programs. ([Hermawan et al., 2020](#))

Implementing bureaucratic reform requires commitment from leaders or officials at the central and regional levels. One way to implement bureaucratic reform is through e-government. E Government is defined as the use of information technology by government agencies to interact with citizens, businesses and other government agencies. This technology is useful for providing government services to society, business and industry. Apart from that, this technology also provides access to information to the public, so it is hoped that it can reduce corrupt practices. ([The World Bank, 2015](#)) E-government that is implemented seriously will be able to support good integrity between policy makers and their implementation. Apart from that, another aspect that must be understood by government officials is that the use of e-government still requires a routine monitoring system and public participation. The widest possible space for public participation as control or supervision of government administration in managing public finances must be provided so that the eradication of corruption can be effective, which means that the bureaucracy's service to the public is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner. Unfortunately, society still does not fully understand the ideas of transparency and accountability. This research will discuss the issue of understanding transparency and accountability in e-government. If the public understands the concepts of accountability and transparency, it is hoped that public participation in preventing corruption can increase. Corruption is defined as the use of public office for personal gain

or in other words, the use of position, rank or official status by an office holder for his own personal gain. Examples of corrupt behavior include: (a) bribery, (b) extortion, (c) fraud, (d) embezzlement, (e) nepotism, (f) cronyism, (g) seizure of public assets and property for personal use ([Rose-Ackerman, 1997](#)).

Corruption in the public sector is the use of public office or public funds by government officials for personal gain. Abuse of this position is an act that is against the law, which can take the form of bribery, oppression that can harm someone, fraud, theft, embezzlement, disclosure of confidential information. This abuse can unreasonably influence the functions and decisions of the public sector. Cases of corruption are difficult to detect without help from the public([independent broad based anti-corruption commission, 2023](#)). Corruption in the public sector reduces efficiency, effectiveness and equity in the provision of public services. Efficiency is related to the success of public service organizations in gaining profits by using production factors based on considerations of economic rationality. Effectiveness is achieving the goals of public service organizations in accordance with the values, mission and function of the organization as a development agent. Equity in the provision of public services includes the distribution and allocation of services provided by public service organizations, so that the principle of justice can be achieved. Needs and values in society can be met, there is equitable development and the public has equal access to the service system offered ([Parliamentary Center, 2010](#))

Various case studies show various types of corruption and how some types can be overcome through the use of Information Technology such as E Governmnet([Basyal et al., 2018](#)) E-government is defined as "the use of web-based internet applications by the Government which aims to: a) improve access and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government bodies. b) bring about improvements in Government operations which may include effectiveness, efficiency, quality of service, or transformation;"([Grönlund & Horan, 2005](#)). E-government can limit but not stop corruption without community participation as supervisors. E-government enables greater participation of citizens in policy and decision making, which was almost impossible in the past. Participation enables greater understanding between the Government and the people and also between the people and the people. This also helps in creating a sense of responsibility of the Government. Through E Government, the government has taken steps to create policies to promote transparency and accountability.([Avotra et al., 2021](#))

Transparency means being open, communicative and responsive. Based on this principle, public authorities are obliged to provide all information related to administrative activities, while on the other hand; Interested parties must have equal access to data and information sources. Thus, the principle of transparency requires that administrative actions be accessible to citizens. This means that the public must receive correct, honest and non-discriminatory information, while still respecting the protection of personal human rights. Thus, the principle of transparency can provide the public with the opportunity to participate in providing responses, criticizing and evaluating the government([National Committee for Governance Policy, 2022](#)). Information transparency will increase government accountability to stakeholders regarding resource use.

Accountability refers to the obligation of public officials to report on the use of public resources and be responsible for the success or failure of achieving goals through performance accountability reporting. This performance reporting is outlined in the

Government Agency Performance Accountability Report (Laporan Akuntabilitas Kinerja Instansi Pemerintah (LAKIP)) which is prepared periodically. This report explains whether the government has implemented programs mandated by stakeholders in accordance with measurable performance targets. Public officials have an official duty to report on their decisions and actions. ([National Committee for Governance Policy, 2022](#)). So, accountability and transparency are key values for democratic governance. ([Jashari & Pepaj, 2018](#)). As a pillar of democratic government, public sector organizations must be able to carry out government by paying attention to aspects of democracy through community participation in the government process, including in policy making. With the increasing role of the community, the role of government employees is no longer just focused on providing public services, but "inviting" the wider community to solve existing social problems and realize necessary programs. To increase interaction between the government and its citizens, it is necessary to establish direct communication between them so that it can make it easier for the public to participate. E Government is the right tool that can function as a fundamental tool for communication between the government and its citizens ([Tejedo-Romero et al., 2022](#)).

Through E Government, the government must be able to take an active role in creating an environment that provides the wider community to participate and take the role as a facilitator to find solutions faced by the community and ensure that the solutions offered are in line with the public interest, both in process and substance. The government has an obligation to ensure that the solutions or policies offered are consistent and in accordance with applicable regulations and norms ([National Committee for Governance Policy, 2022](#)). Public participation is necessary because the public is the main source of community values and these values must be expressed in the form of decision making. This means that the government must respect the public's right to determine their fate. This means that public participation strengthens the stability of decisions. In this case, the government must be able to create conditions so that the public realizes that the government is transparent, which means that information can be easily accessed by anyone, is responsive, and provides services to the community. ([National Committee for Governance Policy, 2022](#)).

Transparency in public organizations can also mean that there is openness and easy access in various government processes such as budget formulation and implementation, revenue management, procurement processes in various sectors. Increasing information transparency will increase public participation in government management, because information transparency carried out by the government shows the suitability of the goals and norms adopted by the community, so that it will have positive consequences for the government's reputation. ([Tejedo-Romero et al., 2022](#)). The transparency approach will be effective if combined with the concept of accountability, which is related to activities such as monitoring, control and supervision by the public ([National Committee for Governance Policy, 2022](#)). It is hoped that monitoring activities carried out by the public through E Government can prevent corruption. However, many citizens do not understand the concepts of transparency and accountability, which makes it difficult for them to participate in government. Local governments must therefore be responsive to the needs of their citizens so that citizens can participate in governance, analyzing its benefits and limitations and exploring how citizens can be empowered to voice their concerns and hold government accountable.

The implementation of E-government can be seen as a positive channel for increasing public participation to prevent corruption in government because of the

transparency of information. The public can access more desired information in a timely manner. With this information, the public can monitor government performance, thereby increasing government accountability. However, in its implementation, information transparency does not guarantee high public participation. Even though the government has provided complete information, the availability and accessibility of information does not always mean ease of understanding of the information disclosed. The public often cannot understand this information. ([Langella et al., 2023](#)). Without an understanding of information transparency, it will be difficult for the public to evaluate government performance. The public will have difficulty determining whether the government's activities are accountable or not.

An example is complete information relating to financial reports. The aim of popular financial reporting is to provide the necessary information that can meet the needs of transparency, accountability. The government has tried to present relevant information related to financial reports, but the public lacks accounting knowledge and has difficulty understanding these financial reports ([Langella et al., 2023](#)). Understanding financial information is a prerequisite for financial reporting to be useful for accountability. Transparency of information related to accessibility can provide users with the opportunity to obtain data and describe the data according to their information needs. Based on the description above, it is stated that the implementation of e-government has not been able to increase public participation as government supervisors to prevent corruption. This occurs due to a lack of public understanding regarding the concepts of information transparency and accountability. If public understanding of transparency and accountability can be improved, it is hoped that there will be increased public participation, so the research hypothesis is: H1: Understanding the concept of information transparency by the public will increase participation in corruption prevention. H2: Understanding the concept of accountability by the public will increase public participation in corruption prevention.

Methods

This research is a correlational quantitative research, namely to examine the influence of public understanding regarding accountability and transparency of E-government on public participation as government supervisors. This research was conducted only to determine public participation in supervising the Bandung City government through the Bandung City E Government, so the research sample was 100 Bandung City residents. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire. Data analysis uses path analysis. Research variables consist of: 1) Two independent variables, namely public understanding of transparency (X1) and accountability (X2). Public understanding of transparency is related to the public's ability to understand information regarding government financial reports; understanding of government programs, understanding of budgets, understanding of government revenues and expenditures, understanding of asset management Public understanding of accountability is related to the public's ability to understand information relating to; government performance targets, government performance achievements, government performance audits. 2) The dependent variable is public participation. This variable measures the public's desire to participate in providing feedback, criticizing and evaluating the government.

Results

To find out whether there is a relationship between public understanding of

transparency (X1) and accountability (X2) and public participation, a path analysis was carried out. This analysis is based on the results of questionnaire answers from respondents who met the requirements, namely 88 respondents. The research results are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Path analysis results

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	2	1483.626	741.8129	17.83589	3.4E-07
Residual	85	3535.238	41.59103		
Total	87	5018.864			

Table 2. Path analysis results

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	10.72172	2.424056703	4.423048	2.86E-05
X Variable 1	-0.30482	0.14562756	-2.09315	0.039317
X Variable 2	0.963487	0.199182821	4.8372	5.81E-06

The results of the path analysis show that there is an influence of public understanding regarding transparency and public accountability on public participation (p value <0.05). The research results show that public participation will increase if the public understands the information presented transparently in E-government. If the public does not understand the information, the public cannot participate because the public will not be able to respond to the existing information. The public will participate in providing responses if they have sufficient knowledge that gives them a sense of self-confidence (self-efficacy). Self-efficacy is a theory developed by [Bandura \(1997\)](#). This theory states that self-efficacy refers to belief in a person's ability to organize and carry out a series of actions necessary to produce certain achievements. Based on this theory, public participation will occur if the public has sufficient knowledge and the public believes that their actions will have an influence not only on themselves but also on other people. The research results also show that public participation will increase if the public understands government accountability. Accountability refers to the obligation of public officials to report on the use of public resources and be responsible for the success or failure of achieving goals. If the public understands the government's accountability, then the public will participate in monitoring, control and supervision activities. If there is a deviation from the government's proper goals, the public can participate in providing criticism and suggestions to improve the condition.

Conclusion

This research aims to determine public understanding regarding transparency and accountability in e-government regarding public participation. Public participation will increase if the public can understand the concepts of transparency and accountability. Understanding the concepts of transparency and accountability can increase public confidence in responding to programs implemented by the government and monitoring and evaluating the results. If there are irregularities in the implementation of government programs, the public can provide criticism and suggestions to the government, so as to prevent corruption.

Suggestion

In a democratic government, public participation is very necessary because the public can know their own needs and participate in planning government programs and monitoring their implementation. Public participation will increase if the public understands the concepts of transparency and accountability. Therefore, to increase public understanding, it is necessary to carry out education and training.

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