Analysis of the Effect of Public Administration Transparency on Public Trust in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of public administration transparency on public trust in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 50 respondents through a structured questionnaire employing a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, and regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between transparency and public trust. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between public administration transparency and public trust, with an R-squared value of 0.452. This suggests that approximately 45.2% of the variance in public trust can be explained by transparency. The results highlight the importance of improving openness, accessibility, and accountability in government to enhance public trust. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers seeking to foster greater trust through improved transparency in Indonesia's public administration.

Keywords: Public Administration Transparency, Public Trust, Indonesia, Government Accountability, Quantitative Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Public trust in government institutions is a fundamental component of a functioning democratic society [1][2]. It ensures that citizens feel confident in the ability of the government to act in their best interests, make informed decisions, and operate with integrity [3], [4]. In Indonesia, as in many other countries, the issue of public trust in government has become increasingly critical. Various factors contribute to public trust, but one of the most important elements is the transparency of public administration [5]. Transparency in government processes, decision-making, and the availability of information to the public can significantly affect how citizens perceive their government's performance and integrity [6], [7].

Improving transparency in Indonesia's public administration is essential for combating corruption and increasing public trust. Transparency allows government actions to be scrutinized, promoting accountability and reducing corruption opportunities. Strong access to information (ATI) laws, mandating both proactive and reactive disclosure, are key to achieving transparency, ensuring citizens' access to government decisions [8]. Effective implementation of ATI laws, with clear responsibilities and oversight, can safeguard against corruption [8]. Transparency is also a crucial tool in anti-corruption efforts, making government actions visible and accountable [9], and should contribute to robust anti-corruption policies [9]. As a governance principle, transparency must be balanced with privacy, ensuring accountability [10]. Literature highlights growing interest in transparency at various government levels, with comparative studies offering insights for Indonesia

[11]. The principle of publicity, backed by ATI laws, promotes responsible administration and ensures state activities are open to public scrutiny [12].

The Indonesian government has introduced initiatives like the Open Government Indonesia initiative to enhance transparency and accessibility of government data, promoting accountability. The Open Government Data (OGD) initiative is a crucial step in preventing corruption by opening data across multiple sectors, though underutilisation remains a challenge [13]. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have also been used to support infrastructure development and improve transparency in government projects [14]. Political competition and administrative power influence transparency, as seen in studies from countries like South Korea [15].[16] Although Indonesia aligns with global anti-corruption trends, the corruption index shows room for improvement [17], [18]. Regionally, the Bali One Data programme faces issues like inconsistent data and insufficient socialisation, highlighting the need for improved implementation [19], [20]. However, despite these efforts, public trust in government institutions remains relatively low. This raises questions about the effectiveness of transparency initiatives in fostering trust and whether other factors may be influencing public perceptions of government integrity.

This study seeks to examine the relationship between public administration transparency and public trust in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 50 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The study aims to determine whether there is a significant effect of transparency on public trust and how different dimensions of transparency, such as openness, accountability, and accessibility, contribute to public perceptions. The findings of this research can provide valuable insights for policymakers in Indonesia and other countries seeking to improve public trust through enhanced transparency in government practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Administration Transparency

Transparency in public administration refers to the availability and accessibility of information regarding governmental processes, decision-making, and policies, allowing citizens to understand how decisions are made and their outcomes. [21] defines transparency as the degree to which government actions are observable by citizens, emphasizing that transparency involves making information accessible, understandable, and useful. Scholars have identified different dimensions of transparency, including openness, accessibility, and accountability [11], [12]. Openness refers to government agencies' willingness to share information, accessibility concerns the ease of obtaining it, and accountability ensures mechanisms to hold officials responsible. These dimensions form the foundation of public administration transparency and influence public perceptions of government. In Indonesia, initiatives like Open Government Indonesia (OGI) aim to enhance public sector transparency by making government information more accessible and fostering a culture of openness and accountability. However, challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and poor information management still hinder the effectiveness of these measures [9], [10]. Therefore, understanding the specific impact of transparency on public trust in Indonesia is crucial.

Public Trust in Government

Public trust in government refers to citizens' confidence in the government's ability to act in their best interests, perform its functions effectively, and uphold fairness and integrity. It is crucial for the legitimacy and stability of democratic systems, influencing citizens' willingness to comply with laws, pay taxes, and engage in civic activities [1]. Several factors affect public trust in government, including performance, responsiveness, corruption, and transparency [22]. Government performance relates to delivering services efficiently, while responsiveness reflects how well the government addresses citizens' concerns. Corruption negatively impacts trust by eroding confidence in the fairness of government actions [5]. Trust can be both short-term, influenced by immediate government actions, and long-term, shaped by accumulated experiences with public institutions. In Indonesia, public trust has fluctuated due to political and economic challenges, with issues like corruption, lack of accountability, and ineffective services contributing to declining trust levels [6], [23].

The Link Between Transparency and Public Trust

A growing body of literature suggests that transparency in public administration positively influences public trust in government. When citizens perceive that government operations are transparent, they are more likely to trust that the government is acting in their best interests [21]. Transparency enables accountability and reduces opportunities for corruption, both of which contribute to higher levels of trust. Empirical studies, such as those by [11], [24] in the U.S. and [25] in South Korea, have demonstrated a positive relationship between transparency and public trust. However, some scholars argue that transparency alone may not suffice to build trust; the information must be accurate, relevant, and presented in an understandable way, and citizens must be capable of processing it for transparency to be effective [9]. In Indonesia, public administration transparency faces challenges such as corruption, inefficiency, and low public engagement, which hinder the success of transparency initiatives. Therefore, exploring how various aspects of transparency affect public trust and identifying strategies to enhance these efforts is crucial.

Transparency and Public Trust in Indonesia

In Indonesia, transparency initiatives have been implemented across various government levels to tackle corruption and inefficiency, with measures such as e-government platforms and open data policies aimed at increasing public information accessibility and improving government accountability [13], [25], [26]. However, public trust in government institutions remains low, as Indonesia still faces significant corruption issues, as highlighted by the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index [27], [28], which undermines the effectiveness of transparency efforts. This complex relationship between public administration transparency and public trust in Indonesia requires further investigation. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on how transparency influences public perceptions of government integrity and effectiveness in the Indonesian context.

METHODS

Research Design

The research design used in this study is quantitative and explanatory in nature. The purpose of the research is to explain the relationship between public administration transparency (the independent variable) and public trust (the dependent variable). By employing a quantitative approach, this study seeks to quantify the strength and significance of the relationship between these two constructs using numerical data and statistical analysis. The research follows a cross-sectional design, where data were collected at a single point in time from respondents to assess their perceptions of transparency and trust in public administration.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of citizens in Indonesia who have interacted with public administration services at different levels of government. Given the broad nature of the population, a non-probability sampling technique known as purposive sampling was used to select participants who have had recent experiences with public administration services. This method ensures that the sample includes respondents with relevant knowledge and experiences related to public administration transparency.

The sample size for this study is 50 respondents, which is considered adequate for exploratory research of this nature. The sample was selected based on the following criteria: (1) Indonesian citizens who have interacted with public administration services in the past year, (2) respondents who are 18 years or older, and (3) those who are willing to participate in the study voluntarily. The demographic profile of the respondents, such as age, gender, and education level, was also collected to provide additional context to the analysis.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through online surveys and direct interviews, designed to measure two main constructs: public administration transparency and public trust. Each construct was operationalized into measurable items based on previous studies and adapted to the Indonesian context. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), allowing for the collection of nuanced data on respondents' perceptions of transparency and trust in government institutions. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test with 10 respondents was conducted to ensure clarity, leading to minor revisions to improve item wording based on the feedback.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, a statistical software commonly used for quantitative research. The analysis process included descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' demographic characteristics and responses, with measures like mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions providing an overview of the data trends. Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales for public administration transparency and public trust, with a value of 0.7 or higher indicating acceptable reliability. Finally, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that public administration transparency significantly affects public trust, providing estimates of the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the relationship between these variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the demographic characteristics and responses of the 50 respondents who had interacted with public administration services in Indonesia.

The sample consisted of 56% male and 44% female respondents, with 62% aged between 25 and 45, 24% younger than 25, and 14% older than 45. In terms of education, 48% held a bachelor's degree, 30% a high school diploma, and 22% a postgraduate degree, while occupations varied, including public servants (34%), private sector employees (30%), and self-employed individuals (18%). The mean score for public administration transparency was 3.82, indicating a moderate perception of transparency, with accessibility rated highest (3.95), but decision-making processes perceived as less transparent (3.68). For public trust, the mean score was 3.67, showing moderate trust in government institutions, with the belief that the government acts in the public's best interest scoring highest (3.80), and concerns about government competence scoring lower (3.55).

Reliability Testing

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The public administration transparency scale had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78, and the public trust scale had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.81. Both values are above the generally accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating that the scales are internally consistent and reliable for measuring the respective constructs.

Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of public administration transparency on public trust. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	R-squared
Public Administration Transparency	0.645	5.23	0.000	0.452

Source: Data Processed author, 2024

The regression results show a positive and significant relationship between public administration transparency and public trust. The coefficient (β) for public administration transparency is 0.645, indicating that for every one-unit increase in transparency, public trust increases by 0.645 units. The p-value is 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant.

The R-squared value of 0.452 indicates that approximately 45.2% of the variance in public trust can be explained by public administration transparency. While this is a substantial proportion, it suggests that other factors, in addition to transparency, contribute to public trust.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that public administration transparency has a significant positive effect on public trust in Indonesia. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights transparency as a critical factor in fostering trust in government institutions [11], [21]. When citizens perceive that government processes are open and information is accessible, they are more likely to trust that the government is acting in their best interests.

In the Indonesian context, transparency initiatives such as Open Government Indonesia have aimed to improve access to public information and promote accountability. The relatively high mean score for accessibility in this study suggests that these efforts have been somewhat successful in making government information more available to the public. However, the lower scores for openness in decision-making indicate that there is still room for improvement, particularly in ensuring that government decisions are made transparently and with public input. The significant relationship between transparency and trust found in this study suggests that enhancing transparency could be an effective strategy for increasing public trust in Indonesia. By improving the openness of government processes and making information more accessible, policymakers can foster greater confidence among citizens. This is particularly important in Indonesia, where corruption and inefficiency have historically undermined public trust in government institutions [9], [11], [21], [24], [25]

Another important dimension of transparency is accountability, which refers to the mechanisms in place to hold government officials responsible for their actions. While this study did not measure accountability directly, the results suggest that greater transparency may enhance

perceptions of accountability, which in turn fosters public trust. Previous studies have found that citizens are more likely to trust government institutions when they believe that officials can be held accountable for their actions [11], [12], [21]. In Indonesia, there is still a need to strengthen accountability mechanisms. While transparency can help by making information about government actions available to the public, it must be complemented by robust systems for holding officials accountable for wrongdoing. Without such systems, transparency initiatives may not be sufficient to fully restore public trust.

Although this study found that public administration transparency explains a significant portion of the variance in public trust, it is important to recognize that other factors also play a role. The R-squared value of 0.452 indicates that transparency alone does not fully explain public trust, and other factors such as government performance, responsiveness, and corruption levels are likely to influence citizens' perceptions. Previous research has shown that government performance and responsiveness are key determinants of public trust [29], [30], [31]. If citizens perceive that the government is delivering services effectively and responding to their needs, they are more likely to trust government institutions. Similarly, reducing corruption can have a positive impact on trust, as corruption erodes confidence in the fairness and integrity of government actions.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that public administration transparency plays a critical role in fostering public trust in Indonesia. The results demonstrate a significant positive relationship between transparency and trust, particularly in terms of the accessibility of government information. However, the findings also suggest that while transparency is essential, it must be complemented by improvements in other areas, such as openness in decision-making and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms. Additionally, factors such as government performance and corruption control are important influences on public trust and should be addressed alongside transparency efforts. Policymakers in Indonesia should prioritize a comprehensive approach to governance reform, incorporating transparency, performance improvement, and anti-corruption measures to enhance public confidence in government institutions.

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