

The Importance Of Accounting Transparency In Public Management For The Strengthening Of Social Control

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Abstract:

Background: Transparency in public accounting is essential to promote trust in institutions, ensure the efficient management of resources, and allow society to participate in social control. In Brazil, regulations such as the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) and the Access to Information Law (LAI) have sought to strengthen accountability in public administration. However, challenges such as cultural resistance and low popular participation still hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Materials and Methods: This study is characterized as a bibliographic review, with consultation of academic publications and legal regulations available on the Google Scholar platform. Search terms such as "transparency in public accounting", "governance", "accountability" and "social control" were used. In addition, normative documents were analyzed, such as the Federal Constitution of 1988 (art. 37), the LRF and the LAI, with the objective of understanding how these norms contribute to promoting a more transparent public administration. The content analysis technique was used to organize the data into thematic categories: governance and accountability, transparency and ICTs, and social control.

Results: The results indicate that, although transparency in Brazilian public administration has advanced, cultural resistance within public organizations limits the full adoption of accountability practices. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as the Managerial Treasury (TG) and SIAFI, have facilitated access to financial information, but insufficient training of public servants compromises their effectiveness. In addition, factors such as civic education and social engagement were identified as determinants for transparency to translate into effective social control.

Conclusion: It is concluded that transparency and accountability are fundamental to strengthen public governance. However, a joint effort is needed involving cultural transformation, continuous training of civil servants and civic education, to encourage the active participation of society and ensure the effective use of digital tools. The integration between regulations, technology, and cultural change is essential to consolidate

an efficient and participatory governance model, promoting trust in public institutions and ensuring the responsible use of resources.

Keywords: *Transparency, Public Governance, Accountability, Public Accounting, Social Control.*

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I. Introduction

Accounting transparency is essential for public management, allowing citizens to monitor the application of resources and participate in social control. Trust in institutions depends on the government's ability to disseminate clear and accessible information about the use of financial resources. In Brazil, norms such as the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) and the Access to Information Law (LAI) seek to promote accountability, but their practical application still faces challenges.

Behn points out that accountability goes beyond mere compliance with legal standards; It involves the clear communication of public actions, facilitating the active participation of society [1]. Efficient public governance depends not only on legislation, but also on the creation of an organizational culture that promotes transparency and accountability of public managers. This article analyzes how public accounting can be used as an essential tool to strengthen social control and trust in public institutions.

II. Literature Review

Corporate governance, according to the Brazilian Institute of Corporate Governance (IBGC), is "the system by which companies and other organizations are directed, monitored and encouraged, involving the relationships between owners, board of directors, executive officers and control bodies" [2].

Its main objective is to align interests and generate sustainable value in the long term, ensuring efficient and ethical management. The fundamental principles of this governance are transparency, equity, responsibility and accountability, essential in both the private and public sectors [2].

These principles are adapted to public governance to ensure the efficient use of public resources and promote citizen participation. Transparency, in particular, plays a crucial role in enabling clear communication with stakeholders and encouraging social control. Schick (1998) observes that, in public administration, accountability and the disclosure of clear information are fundamental for society to be able to monitor the performance of managers and demand accountability [3].

CPC 26 – Presentation of Financial Statements complements this concept by defining that financial statements must provide clear and useful information for social control. These financial reports structure data to facilitate inspection by society and control bodies, in line with the requirements of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) [4,6]. In this way, public accounting contributes to the promotion of accountability and transparency.

A Constituição Federal de 1988, por meio do art. 37, consagra o princípio da publicidade, exigindo que todos os atos administrativos sejam públicos e acessíveis à sociedade. Isso reforça a importância da transparência na administração pública, permitindo que a sociedade participe ativamente da gestão e controle dos recursos públicos [5]. Além disso, a LRF impõe a divulgação periódica de relatórios fiscais, possibilitando que cidadãos e órgãos de controle acompanhem o desempenho orçamentário de forma contínua [6].

However, the implementation of accountability in Brazil faces challenges. Matias-Pereira (2010) highlights that cultural barriers, such as favoritism and the weak participation of civil society, hinder the consolidation of a culture of responsibility in public management [8]. Pinho and Sacramento (2009) emphasize that accountability involves more than accountability; It is a comprehensive concept that includes transparency, strict responsibility and social control [7].

In the field of contemporary public management, Denhardt and Denhardt (2003) suggest that the New Public Service shifts the focus from efficiency to citizenship, prioritizing the active participation of citizens and placing the public interest as the central axis of management [9]. Tools such as the Managerial Treasury (TG) and SIAFI are essential to promote transparency and allow social control in the Brazilian public administration. These platforms centralize financial information and improve the effectiveness of financial data disclosure (Fonseca et al., 2020) [10].

Finally, the adoption of the Brazilian Accounting Standards Applied to the Public Sector (NBC TSP) also represents a relevant milestone in the modernization of public accounting. Augustinho and Lima (2012) argue that these standards facilitate the harmonization of accounting practices and ensure the comparability of financial information, contributing to trust in public institutions [11]. Silva (2009) adds that transparency involves not only the disclosure of data, but also the availability of relevant and understandable information to the public, promoting effective social control [12].

III. Material And Methods

Type of Research

This study is characterized as a bibliographic research, of a qualitative and exploratory nature, focused on the analysis of academic publications and legal regulations that address the themes of public governance, transparency and accountability.

Methodological Procedures

Bibliographic Survey

The survey was carried out by consulting scientific articles available on the Google Scholar platform, searching for publications related to public accounting, governance, and social control. Priority was given to articles published in the last 10 years that presented a relevant contribution to the debate on transparency and accountability in public administration. In addition to international authors such as Schick (1998) and Denhardt and Denhardt (2003), national authors such as Matias-Pereira (2010) and Fonseca et al. (2020) were also included.

Analysis of Legal Regulations

In addition to academic publications, the research included the analysis of essential normative documents, such as the Federal Constitution of 1988 (art. 37), the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) and the Access to Information Law (LAI). These regulations were selected because they are a reference for the promotion of governance and public transparency in Brazil. IAS 26 and IAS TSP were also used as a basis for the analysis of accounting applied to the public sector.

Selection and Critical Analysis of Literature

After data collection, the articles and normative documents were organized into thematic categories:

Governance and accountability

Public transparency and ICTs

Social control and accountability

The critical analysis consisted of comparing the different approaches of the literature, identifying convergences and divergences between the studies. This process allowed for a broader understanding of good practices of transparency and accountability in public administration.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

Scientific articles related to public accounting, governance, transparency and accountability, found on the Google Scholar platform.

Normative documents applicable to the Brazilian context, such as CF/88, LRF and LAI.

Publications addressing the impact of ICTs on promoting transparency.

Exclusion Criteria:

Studies focused exclusively on the private sector.

Publications without a direct relationship with the public administration or that do not have a relevant practical application for the topic.

Research Limitations

Among the limitations, the dependence on sources available on the Google Scholar platform stands out, which may restrict the scope of the survey. In addition, the research did not include empirical data, limiting itself to the critical analysis of the texts and documents found.

IV. Result

1. Advances in Public Transparency and Cultural Challenges

The analysis of the articles demonstrates that, although public transparency in Brazil has advanced with regulations such as the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) and the Access to Information Law (LAI), the practical application of these principles still presents challenges. In the case of the Municipality of Barreiras, the study shows that, even with the disclosure of financial data, the lack of incentive for active citizen participation compromised effective social control [13]. In addition, Reis et al. (2018) highlight that the absence of an organizational culture based on accountability undermines the effectiveness of public transparency and social control [14].

2. Impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on Public Governance

ICTs have played a key role in strengthening transparency and accountability. Tools such as the Managerial Treasury (TG) and SIAFI were highlighted for facilitating access to financial data, allowing greater control by society (Fonseca et al., 2020)[10]. Filgueiras (2011) argues that the adoption of these technologies improves public governance by promoting greater interaction between government and citizens.

3. Limitations in the Use of ICTs and Resistance to Change

Despite the advances provided by ICTs, the articles highlight significant cultural barriers to their full adoption. Matias-Pereira (2010) observes that internal resistance in public organizations prevents these tools from being used effectively[8]. In addition, the lack of technical training of public servants reduces the positive impact that these technologies could generate on governance and accountability.

4. The Importance of Clarity and Accessibility of Information

Effective transparency requires more than just the formal disclosure of financial data; the information must be clear and understandable so that it can be used by society in an active way. Platt Neto et al. (2007) state that transparency is only complete when the published data allows for efficient oversight by citizens[15]. Without this clarity, the publication of data becomes a formality, compromising the effectiveness of government transparency.

5. Determining Factors of Budget Transparency

The study by Reis et al. (2018) shows that factors such as education, urbanization, and perception of corruption influence public transparency. More educated and engaged populations tend to better interpret the financial data disclosed, participating more actively in social control[14]. This reinforces the need for public policies aimed at civic education, in order to ensure efficient and participatory public governance.

V. Discussion

Public transparency is consolidated as one of the fundamental pillars of contemporary governance. However, the results of the research demonstrate that normative advances, such as the Access to Information Law (LAI) and the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF), although significant, find limitations in practical application [6] [14]. These limits stem both from structural factors, such as low investment in technologies, and from cultural aspects, such as resistance to accountability, as observed by Matias-Pereira (2010) [8].

In addition, the concept of transparency is not limited to the disclosure of financial data, but includes the ability to communicate information in a clear and understandable way. As Platt Neto et al. (2007) argue, true transparency materializes when society is able to interpret and use this data for social control [15]. This perspective indicates that public governance needs to be more than reactive, adopting a proactive posture in communicating with citizens.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have played an essential role in strengthening transparency. Tools such as the Managerial Treasury (TG) and the Integrated Financial Administration System (SIAFI) have allowed the centralization of financial information and the dissemination of data in real time, increasing the effectiveness of social control (Fonseca et al., 2020) [10]. However, the simple adoption of these technologies is not enough; Continuous training of public servants is necessary to ensure the proper use of digital platforms.

Resistance to change within public organizations was another critical point identified. Matias-Pereira (2010) observes that the organizational culture of the Brazilian public sector is still averse to the full adoption of governance practices, making it difficult to incorporate new tools and regulations [8]. This resistance is reflected in the limitation of the use of ICTs, compromising the expected impact of these technologies.

The lack of active participation of the population represents one of the greatest challenges for the implementation of transparent and efficient governance. Although the LAI and other regulations encourage access to information, Reis et al. (2018) highlight that factors such as civic education and social engagement are determinant for the success of these initiatives [14]. The study on the Municipality of Barreiras demonstrated that, without incentives for participation, the mere availability of data does not guarantee effective social control [13].

In addition, the analysis reveals that external factors, such as the level of urbanization and the perception of corruption, directly influence the effectiveness of transparency practices. In more urbanized regions with greater access to education, the population tends to make better use of the available information to monitor the use of public resources (Reis et al., 2018) [14]. This reinforces the importance of public policies that integrate transparency with education and civic awareness programs.

Accountability, defined as a government's ability to account for its actions, goes beyond the publication of financial reports. Pinho and Sacramento (2009) state that accountability involves political and

administrative responsibility, which means that public managers must justify their decisions and actions before society and control bodies [7]. This approach expands the traditional concept of accountability, requiring greater integration between management and governance.

The research also suggests that public transparency is an essential tool in the fight against corruption. The clear and timely disclosure of financial information can inhibit illicit practices, by allowing both society and inspection agencies to closely monitor the execution of public policies (Filgueiras, 2011). However, without a solid foundation of civic education, the population will not be able to interpret the data, which reduces the effectiveness of these initiatives.

The alignment between legal norms and organizational culture is another essential point discussed in the literature. The effective implementation of laws such as the LRF and the LAI depends not only on the existence of the norms, but also on a change in the mentality of public managers (Matias-Pereira, 2010) [8]. Transparent governance can only be consolidated if there is a joint effort to transform the organizational culture and encourage citizen participation.

The integration between technological tools and public policies is necessary to consolidate an efficient governance model. ICTs, such as SIAFI and the Managerial Treasury, cannot be seen only as technical instruments, but as central elements to promote an open and participatory public administration (Fonseca et al., 2020) [10].

Finally, the literature reveals that public transparency is not an end in itself, but a means to strengthen trust in institutions and promote social justice. The creation of a culture of accountability, in which public managers are held accountable for their actions, is essential to consolidate an efficient public administration aligned with the interests of society.

This discussion also highlights that isolated initiatives are not enough; An integrated approach is needed that combines legal norms, technologies and civic education. Public governance will only be effective when transparency and accountability are an integral part of the organizational culture and not just a normative requirement to be formally fulfilled.

Therefore, the results indicate that the success of public governance depends on a profound cultural and structural change. The transformation must include the adoption of new technologies, the strengthening of civic education, and the promotion of an organizational culture based on transparency and the public interest.

VI. Conclusion

It is concluded that transparency and accountability are essential pillars to strengthen public governance in Brazil. However, the effective application of these practices faces significant challenges, especially related to cultural resistance and lack of technical training. The research shows that, although ICTs have provided important advances, their effectiveness depends on the adoption of an integrated approach that includes civic education and the transformation of organizational culture.

Civic education plays a central role in promoting transparency, empowering the population to use the available information to exercise social control. In addition, the integration between legal standards, technologies, and organizational culture is essential to consolidate an efficient and participatory public administration.

Finally, this study highlights that the success of public transparency initiatives does not depend only on the existence of laws and technologies, but on the construction of an organizational culture based on accountability and the public interest. Efficient public governance requires continuous interaction between government and society, promoting trust in institutions and ensuring the responsible use of public resources.

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