

Peering Through the Digital Window: Assessing Online Disclosure of Public Procurement Data in Bima City

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Keyword:

Corruption;
Online Disclosure;
Procurement.

Abstract: This article examines the extent to which public procurement data is disclosed online, with a particular emphasis on its accessibility and availability on the official website of the Bima City Government, <https://lpse.bimakota.go.id/eproc4>. To assess the website-based transparency of public procurement documents, the researchers used the Municipal Transparency Index (MTI) from Portugal's TIAC (Transparência e Integridade Associação Cívica) and utilized primary data, obtained through in-depth interviews with informants from the government's electronic procurement system, and secondary data, gathered through literature studies of official documents, mass media articles, and internet news sites. This research aims to enhance the empirical case study on website-based transparency in Indonesian local governments, concentrating on data openness and accessibility as a crucial prerequisite for transparency and a core part of the Open Government initiative. The official website of the Bima City Government's Electronic Public Procurement currently does not show an indication of ideal openness in terms of data availability and accessibility, due to specific constraints in the form of budget limitations, staff competence, and the commitment of political leaders. Corruption allegations against certain elites in the city illustrate the vulnerability of goods and services procurement to the worst maladministration practices and abuse of power.

Kata Kunci:

Korupsi;
Publisitas Online;
Pengadaan.

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengungkap taraf publisitas online data pengadaan publik, dengan penekanan khusus pada aksesibilitas dan ketersediaan data di situs resmi Pemerintah Kota Bima, <https://lpse.bimakota.go.id/eproc4>. Untuk menilai transparansi dokumen pengadaan barang dan jasa pemerintah berbasis situs-web, peneliti menggunakan Indeks Transparansi Kota (Municipal Transparency Index/MTI) dari TIAC (Transparência e Integridade Associação Cívica) Portugal dan menggunakan data primer yang diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dengan para narasumber yang mengelola sistem pengadaan barang dan jasa Pemerintah Kota Bima serta data sekunder yang diperoleh dari studi literatur terhadap dokumen resmi, artikel media massa, dan situs-situs berita di internet. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan studi kasus empiris mengenai transparansi berbasis situs-web pemerintah daerah di Indonesia, dengan konsentrasi pada keterbukaan dan aksesibilitas data sebagai prasyarat penting perwujudan transparansi dan bagian inti dari inisiatif Open Government. Situs resmi LPSE Pemerintah Kota Bima saat ini belum menunjukkan indikasi keterbukaan ideal ditinjau dari ketersediaan dan aksesibilitas data, karena adanya kendala spesifik berupa keterbatasan anggaran, kompetensi staf, dan komitmen pemimpin politik. Tuduhan korupsi yang menimpa beberapa elit tertentu di kota ini menggambarkan kerentanan pengadaan barang dan jasa terhadap praktik maladministrasi terburuk dan penyalahgunaan kekuasaan.

INTRODUCTION

The extent of data accessibility and the deliberate manner in which government agencies offer citizens access to information regarding the nature, dynamics, processes, and outcomes of their organisational activities is a crucial aspect that embodies the conceptual essence of Open Government (OG). Not limited to this, the concept also underlines the significance of the involvement and active engagement of the public in the strategic decision-making domain of public organisations. Data openness is a key prerequisite for building the pillar of transparency,

which must be sown first for the other pillars or dimensions of public participation and collaboration between parties to materialise. OG is an initiative aimed at establishing open government systems that can consistently foster government openness to enhance accountability and encourage civic engagement in socio-political decision-making, and long-term collaboration between constitutional mandate holders and the public as external stakeholders (Lee et al., 2019; Wirtz & Birkmeyer, 2015). Consistent with the essence of OG, individuals not only possess the ability to obtain information and engage with government procedures, but they can also actively contribute and participate in significant ways (Lathrop & Ruma, 2010: xix).

As is well known, public organisations can achieve the transparency pillar of OG through (i) setting up institutional mechanisms for how the government responds to citizen requests for certain information offline as well as online (passive disclosure, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act/FOIA) or by (ii) using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to release information more effectively (active disclosure) (Tai, 2021: 8). The level of "web-based transparency" that the researcher focuses on is based on the second way of embodying OG. Transparency is the practice of a public organisation actively sharing information, which enables external parties to observe and evaluate the organization's performance (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010). OG requires that government agencies fully commit to the principle of openness and maintain it as part of their mission and strategy (McDermott, 2010: 413).

The digitisation of transparency measures in government institutions is the latest development of electronic OG, conceptualised later with various terms, but still containing relatively similar meanings, such as Electronic Government, Digital Governance, or Digital Open Government, which describe the situation of how digital technology has become an integrative part of contemporary government modernisation strategies and contributes significantly to systematic public value creation (OECD, 2014). This kind of transformation of the mode of governing affects the pattern of governance, development, and community tasks implemented by public organisations in various fields, including in the realm of goods and services procurement termed Electronic Public Procurement (EPP).

The EPP reflects the use of ICT in purchasing needs for public organisations and the implementation of development activities. The purpose of web-based ICT systems is to facilitate the entire purchasing process, from the initial identification of user needs to the search for relevant information, negotiation, ordering, receiving offers, and post-purchase activities (Croom & Brandon-Jones, 2007). The EPP encompasses several methods such as e-tenders, auctions, and the online purchase of products and services through portals, private platforms, and electronic data interchange (Dooley & Purchase, 2006). These methods contribute to enhancing transparency and improving economic results, including reduced contract pricing and administrative expenses (Gurakar & Tas, 2016). The incorporation of digital technologies in public procurement is typically anticipated to mitigate the likelihood of corruption (Sirotkina & Lazarevich, 2022: 2). The adoption of the EPP will significantly improve accountability and transparency, streamline market entry and promote fair competition, optimise the efficiency of the procurement process, fulfil audit-monitoring obligations, and offer current information to foster transparent governance in public procurement and expenditure.

In Indonesia's present circumstances, the government has issued Presidential Instruction No. 17/2011 on Corruption Prevention and Eradication. This instruction includes a crucial requirement that a minimum of 75% of the expenses for goods and services by ministries and councils, or 40% of the expenses for goods and services by local governments, must be carried out through the EPP. Since not all public institutions have implemented this system, the government has issued Presidential Instruction No. 1/2015 to expedite the electronic procurement of goods/services by all public organisations for government purposes. The regulation served as the basis for the implementation of Presidential Rule No. 4/2015, which mandates that all government procurement must be carried out via the EPP. The adoption of the EPP in Indonesia has yielded favourable outcomes in curbing corruption within the realm of government procurement. Hence, expediting the adoption of the 100% EPP across all

government agencies is imperative, as it not only facilitates economic efficiency and enhances the competitiveness of government procurement, but also enhances transparency and accountability (Puspita & Gultom, 2022: 11).

Closely related to the concepts of OG and the EPP, this article will discuss the degree of "online data disclosure" or "website-based transparency" referring to the availability and accessibility of information (documents) on the procurement of goods and services managed by the Bima City Government on special official websites relevant to the domain. The researchers utilise the Municipal Transparency Index (MTI) formula as a measure of transparency in their investigation. This formula was created in 2013 by Transparência e Integridade Associação Cívica (TIAC), the representative of Transparency International in Portugal, in conjunction with four academic institutions in the country (Tavares & da Cruz, 2020: 5). The objective of MTI is to provide standardised criteria for measuring the level of transparency in municipalities by analysing the official websites of local governments. The accessibility of information on these websites has the potential to enhance the calibre of democracy and enable citizens to oversee and engage in local governance (da Cruz & Marques, 2014). The Municipal Transparency Index (MTI) consists of 76 indicators that are divided into seven dimensions. The first dimension includes indicators related to organisational information, social composition, and the functioning of municipal institutions, executive, and legislative bodies, with 18 indicators. The second dimension focuses on plans and planning, with 13 indicators. The third dimension covers taxes, tariffs, service fees, and local regulations, with 5 indicators. The fourth dimension assesses the relations between municipal authorities and citizens as service users, with 8 indicators. The fifth dimension evaluates public procurement, with 10 indicators. The sixth dimension examines economic and financial transparency, with 12 indicators. Lastly, the seventh dimension assesses urban planning and land use, with 10 indicators (da Cruz et al., 2016: 876-877).

We employed ten MTI public procurement transparency indicators to evaluate the presence and ease of access to data on the official websites of the Bima City Government. The indicators encompass data regarding public procurement carried out via non-competitive procedures, encompassing specifics about suppliers, quantities, and justifications. These indicators also include the accessibility of public procurement records, assessments of bids, and the disclosure of the identities of both successful and unsuccessful bidders for each contract. In addition, the indicators encompass the disclosure of successful bids, agreements made with contractors or suppliers, reports on monitoring and performance evaluation of suppliers/contractors/service providers, the number of contracts per supplier/contractor/service provider, the extent of additional work for each contract, and the inclusion of expert opinions, approval stamps, and audit reports (da Cruz et al., 2016: 892).

Based on the above arguments, this research is intended to add to the empirical case studies on the level of web-based transparency managed by local governments in Indonesia. According to the researcher's observations, the official website of the Bima City Government's EPP, <https://lpse.bimakota.go.id/eproc4>, does not show an indication of ideal openness in terms of data availability and accessibility. On that basis, the questions that will guide researchers to search for research data are (1) what is the degree of transparency of online publicity of Bima City Government's public procurement documents; and (2) are there any significant obstacles faced in the process?

RESEARCH METHOD

The authors employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilising a case study approach. Qualitative research seeks to comprehend diverse challenges and obtain answers to various topics by analysing distinct social contexts and individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2016). A case study is a method that focuses on thoroughly examining the characteristics of a single unit or case to make broader conclusions about a wider group of units (Campbell & Stanley, 2015; Gerring, 2004) using process tracing tools (George & Bennett, 2004). The unit of analysis

of this research is website-based transparency of public procurement data and the activities inherent in its management in the Bima City Government. The researchers employed two distinct forms of data, specifically (i) primary data, acquired directly through comprehensive interviews with a select group of informants determined by purposive sampling technique, from the administration of the Bima City Government's electronic procurement system; and (ii) secondary data, obtained through an extensive examination of official documents, mass media articles, internet news sites, and other relevant sources. The instrument used in this research is an interview guideline, intended to facilitate researchers to explore information that is relevant to the needs of this research. In addition, standard equipment such as stationery, voice recorders, and cameras was used to record, record, and visualise supporting data in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Uncovering the Layers of Website-based Transparency on Public Procurement Data

Website-based transparency in the context of public procurement pertains to the local government's endeavours to enhance open and transparent access for the public, enabling them to gain comprehensive knowledge of all the processes and dynamics involved in their public procurement activities. The public can oversee and supervise the procurement process, ensuring that it adheres to relevant legislation and maintains fairness and transparency. Within this framework, local governments can create a specialised website that functions as a platform for sharing information about public procurement. This website may provide information about the procurement process, pertinent documents, prerequisites, and stipulations that interested parties must adhere to. Data openness in the provision and accessibility of a website reflects its transparency, which is a crucial requirement for establishing transparency and a fundamental aspect of open government projects. Data openness comprises not only the mere presence of information, but also highlights the significance of data being generally acknowledged, simply obtainable, and available to all individuals (Milic et al., 2022: 1).

Seeding website-based transparency offers several advantages. First, it provides the public with convenient access to information regarding the procurement of goods and services conducted by local governments. Second, the procurement process can be monitored and supervised by the public due to its easy accessibility. This measure serves to mitigate corruption, collusion, and nepotism. Third, local governments exhibit their dedication to honesty and transparency in providing public services by disclosing procurement-related information. Fourth, by increasing open access, the procurement process can operate with more efficiency. Interested parties can quickly access the necessary information, ask questions, or provide feedback, thus speeding up the procurement process. Web-based transparency plays an important role in improving transparency, accountability, and public participation in local government procurement. By providing more open access, local governments can build public trust and create a fairer and more efficient procurement environment.

As mentioned in the introduction, this paper will present a discussion of the degree of online data disclosure referring to the availability and accessibility of procurement information managed by the Bima City Government on specialised websites relevant to the domain. Researchers utilised ten indicators developed by TIAC Portugal to investigate matters of transparency, accountability, and fairness in the public procurement process of the Bima City Government. The detailed substance of the ten indicators can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. The substance of Ten MTI Indicators

| No. | Indicators | Descriptions |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | Procurement of goods and services through non-competitive procedures (supplier, quantity, and reason) | Centres around the utilisation of non-competitive procedures in the public acquisition of goods and services. It provides details regarding suppliers, monetary values, and justifications for employing such procedures. |

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|----|--|---|
| 2 | Public procurement documents | Covers the availability and accessibility of public procurement documents, which include tender notices, specifications, procurement terms, and other relevant information. |
| 3 | Bid evaluation reports for each public tender | Emphasised the importance of having a report explaining the evaluation process for each public tender, including the criteria used and the rationale behind the selection of the winning bid. |
| 4 | Disclosure of the identities of the successful and unsuccessful parties (or the entity consulted for alternative methods) for every contract | Focuses on the transparency of the procurement process by requiring the publication of the name of the winner and the loser (or consulted entity) for each contract. |
| 5 | Publication of the winning bids | Emphasises the importance of making the winning bid publicly available, enabling scrutiny and evaluation of the procurement outcome. |
| 6 | Contracts signed with contractors or suppliers | Highlight the need for transparency in signing contracts with contractors or suppliers, ensuring that terms and conditions are documented. |
| 7 | Assessing the performance of suppliers, contractors, or service providers through monitoring and evaluation. | Focuses on the availability of performance monitoring and evaluation reports for suppliers, contractors, or service providers, ensuring accountability and quality control. |
| 8 | Number of contracts awarded to each supplier/contractor/service provider | Monitoring the number of contracts granted to individual suppliers, contractors, or service providers, offering valuable information on the concentration or diversity of procurement. |
| 9 | Amount of additional work performed for each contract | Involves tracking the amount of additional work done for each contract, providing transparency into the additional costs incurred during the procurement process. |
| 10 | Expert opinion, stamp of approval, and audit report | Emphasising the importance of expert opinions, approval stamps, and audit reports in ensuring the integrity and quality of the procurement process. |

Source: Adapted from Cruz et al. (2016)

The following picture is the homepage of the *LPSE* website, which does not contain all substantive matters as a reflection of the application of the ten MTI indicators.



Picture 1
 Homepage of the LPSE Website
 Source: Obtained from <https://lpse.bimakota.go.id/eproc4>, October 2023

The LPSE is the platform used to implement the electronic procurement of goods and services in Bima City. However, in its implementation, the website does not appear to contain all substantive matters that reflect the implementation of the ten MTI indicators. During 2013-2023, there were 3,709 procurement data for Bima City Government, of which 829 packages were tendered and the remaining 2880 packages were non-tendered. Referring to the availability of this data, the fulfilment of MTI transparency that can be tracked on the website, although to a limited extent and scope, are indicators one, two, three, four, five, and eight. Regarding indicator one,

information on the use of non-competitive procedures (non-tender/direct procurement) can be tracked in some public procurement data. Information on the implementing party and the budget amount can be found, but a description of the reasons for using the procedure and a report on its implementation cannot be found. Some of the Bima City Government's procurement data contains procurement documents such as tender notices, specifications, and procurement requirements (indicator two). While this does not include all procurement data, the existence of these documents provides accessibility to important information for parties interested or involved in the procurement process.

Indicator three, which emphasises bid evaluation reports for each public tender, can also be traced in some procurement data. Although it does not cover all the data, the existence of an evaluation report that includes the criteria and reasons for selecting the winning bid gives an idea of the evaluation process carried out. Publication of the names of winners and losers (indicator four) can also be tracked in some procurement data. While not covering all contracts, the publication of the names of winners and losers provides a greater level of transparency in the procurement process. Indicator five, which emphasises the publication of winning bids, can also be traced in some procurement data. While it does not include all winning bids, it does allow for more open scrutiny and evaluation of procurement outcomes. Finally, indicator eight which tracks the number of contracts awarded to each supplier/contractor/service provider can also be tracked in some procurement data. Although it does not cover all contracts, the information on the number of contracts awarded gives an idea of the pattern of procurement.

The positive impression created through the application of the transparency indicator of online publicity above is eroded by the absence of the application of indicators six, seven, nine, and ten on the website because no information or action reflects the application of these indicators in the procurement process of goods and services in Bima City. Indicator six, which emphasises tracking the number of additional contracts, has nothing available on the website about the amount of additional work awarded to suppliers/contractors/service providers after the initial contract was signed. Indicator seven, which includes expert opinions, approval stamps, and audit reports, was also not found on the website. This information is important to ensure that the procurement process has undergone independent evaluation and there is adequate monitoring of the use of public funds. Indicator nine, which emphasises the publication of performance monitoring and evaluation reports, is also not implemented on the website. Publication of these reports is important to ensure that suppliers/contractors/service providers are evaluated objectively, and their performance can be monitored by interested parties. Furthermore, the website does not adhere to indicator ten, which pertains to the incorporation of information and communication technologies in the procurement process. Although the potential benefits of utilising information and communication technology in public procurement include enhanced efficiency, openness, and accountability, regrettably, these advantages have not been observed on the platform. The non-implementation of indicators six, seven, nine, and ten in the *LPSE* website shows that there are shortcomings in efforts to improve transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in the procurement process of goods and services in Bima City.

Several indicators can be traced in the publicity of 3,709 procurement data of the Bima City Government but to a limited extent and scope. These indicators represent a positive first step in improving transparency and accountability in Bima City's public procurement process. However, shortcomings in the application of indicators six, seven, nine, and ten on the *LPSE*'s website indicate the need for further efforts to improve and expand the application of these indicators to achieve the expected goals. This study of the degree of online publicity of public procurement data within the Bima City Government will produce several significant theoretical contributions.

First, it identified shortcomings in the application of MTI indicators. This research identified that the *LPSE* website does not contain all substantive items that reflect the application of the ten MTI indicators. This shows that there are shortcomings in efforts to improve transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in the procurement process of goods and services in Bima City. Second, the measurement of transparency levels. This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the transparency level seen on the website, as assessed through the implementation of the MTI

indicators. Although limited in extent and scope, we can measure the fulfilment of transparency that can be tracked on the platform. Third, the importance of information accessibility. This research highlights the importance of information accessibility in the procurement process. While not covering all procurement data, the existence of procurement documents such as tender notices, specifications, and procurement terms provide important information accessibility for parties interested or involved in the procurement process.

Fourth, the implications of information and communication technology. This research shows that the use of information and communication technology in the public procurement process can improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. However, the application of ten indicators involving the use of information and communication technology has not been seen in the platform. Fifth, a need for independent evaluation and monitoring. This research highlights the importance of independent evaluation and monitoring in the procurement process. Indicator seven, which includes expert opinion, stamp of approval, and audit reports, was not found on the *LPSE* website. It is crucial to have this information to guarantee that the procurement process has been subjected to impartial assessment and that there is sufficient oversight of the utilisation of public funds. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of transparency and accountability in public procurement in Bima City by identifying flaws in the use of MTI indicators and emphasising the significance of information accessibility, information and communication technology, and independent evaluation and monitoring.

Obstacles to Achieving Online Transparency of Public Procurement Data in Bima City

E-governance facilitates effective governance and eradicates corruption, particularly in the realm of public procurement (Azamela et al., 2022; Iswanto et al., 2022). E-Government is the utilisation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for the provision of government services and the administration of public affairs. It includes different elements of government, such as decision-making procedures, provision of services, and involvement of citizens. The success of e-governance in promoting good governance and reducing corruption is contingent upon several elements and context-specific considerations. Public procurement is an area where e-governance may significantly contribute favourably. Public procurement is the method through which governments get products, services, and works from external sources. The area is highly susceptible to corruption because of the significant financial transactions and the possibility of collaboration and favouritism.

Utilising electronic channels in public procurement can effectively mitigate concerns such as bias and enhance equity in the process. Research, such as the study conducted by Adjei-Bamfo et al. (2020), has emphasised the beneficial influence of electronic channels in reducing biases and fostering transparency. Electronic channels ensure equitable access to procurement opportunities for all prospective bidders. Online platforms and e-procurement systems guarantee the accessibility of information regarding tenders, bidding documents, and evaluation criteria to all interested parties. This diminishes the probability of showing favouritism towards particular suppliers or contractors. The system can ensure the implementation of standardised processes and procedures, hence reducing the scope for discretion or subjective decision-making. Electronic channels facilitate the automation of many stages of the procurement process, including bid submission, evaluation, and contract award. This ensures that evaluations are conducted using unbiased criteria and that all bidders are treated with equal fairness.

Electronic channels enhance openness in public procurement by enabling the online publication of tender notices, bid evaluations, and contract awards, thereby increasing visibility and accessibility to the public. They will ensure the preservation of a thorough audit trail of procurement activities, meticulously documenting each stage of the process. The audit trail can be examined and scrutinised to identify any anomalies or indications of bias. It offers unambiguous documentation of acts performed, guaranteeing responsibility and minimising the likelihood of fraudulent behaviour. Electronic channels provide instantaneous monitoring of the procurement process. This enables regulatory bodies, non-governmental organisations, and other interested

parties to supervise the advancement of procurement operations and identify any indications of bias or manipulation. Regular monitoring aids in the prevention and resolution of issues before they worsen. Through the utilisation of electronic channels, governments can improve transparency, accountability, and fairness in public procurement, thus reducing the chances of bias and fostering a more competitive and just procurement environment.

The implementation of e-governance in public procurement can improve transparency, responsibility, and effectiveness in the procedure. By digitising procurement activities, governments may provide clear instructions, automate the tendering processes, and establish online platforms for suppliers to submit their ideas. Implementing a standardised approach can diminish the probability of corruption by minimising chances of manipulation. The introduction of e-governance in public procurement can enhance transparency by guaranteeing that details regarding procurement opportunities, bid assessments, and contract allocations are readily available to the general public. The increased transparency allows for a more comprehensive analysis and reduces the likelihood of unnoticed unethical behaviours. Furthermore, e-governance can employ mechanisms for surveillance and supervision, such as digital auditing and tracking systems. These strategies can aid in the detection of abnormalities and ensure compliance with procurement regulations, therefore improving the prevention of corruption.

It is important to recognise that the effectiveness of e-governance in combating corruption in public procurement depends on different factors. These criteria include the quality of governance institutions, the level of political commitment and dedication to transparency, the skill and expertise of government staff, and the existence of reliable ICT infrastructure. To establish efficient electronic governance in the realm of public procurement, it is imperative to consistently monitor, assess, and adjust strategies to address emerging challenges and vulnerabilities. Although not a panacea for all governance issues, it is imperative to adopt other measures such as strengthening legal frameworks, promoting ethical behaviour, and fostering a culture of integrity. Electronic governance has the potential to improve the efficiency of governance and reduce corruption in the public procurement process. Implementing openness, accountability, and efficiency, can assist in reducing the dangers linked to corruption. The efficacy of e-governance in public procurement is contingent upon other factors, and a comprehensive strategy that integrates e-governance with other initiatives is crucial for attaining enduring and corruption-free outcomes.

However, there are frequently encountered challenges in implementing Website-based Transparency of Public Procurement data. Initially, comprehensive data and information are absent. Procurement websites lack comprehensive and intricate data and information regarding the procurement process, encompassing tender documents, bid evaluations, contracts, and monitoring reports. Inadequate and comprehensive data might impede transparency and accountability in public procurement. Second, the aspect of information quality and reliability. Procurement websites must furnish precise, current, and dependable information. Nevertheless, websites frequently encounter issues about the calibre and dependability of the information they give, including inaccuracies in data, insufficient information, or infrequent updates. This diminishes public confidence and impedes the attainment of transparency. Third, concerns regarding the security and privacy of data arise. Procurement websites are required to uphold the security and confidentiality of the data kept inside them. Nevertheless, data security concerns, including cyber-attacks and privacy breaches, frequently arise and pose a risk to the reliability and confidence of the procurement system.

Fourth, there is a dearth of political backing and dedication. Political endorsement and dedication from the government and relevant agencies are essential for the implementation of Website-Based Transparency in Public Procurement. Nevertheless, there frequently exists a dearth of robust political backing or a lack of dedication to executing openness in public procurement. The lack of sufficient support can impede the installation and advancement of transparent procurement websites. Fifth, there is a deficiency in public engagement and participation. A proficient procurement website should enable public involvement and participation in the procurement process. Nevertheless, decision-making processes frequently suffer from a dearth of public engagement or a deficiency of tools that facilitate public input or

inquiries about procurement. Insufficient public participation might diminish responsibility and impede endeavours to attain more openness.

Sixth, there is a lack of widespread access and proficiency in digital technology among users and stakeholders participating in the procurement process. Some individuals and groups lack sufficient internet access or technological literacy, which hinders their ability to benefit from the information available on procurement websites. To accomplish successful online dissemination of public procurement data, it is imperative to thoroughly address these obstacles. A comprehensive approach is required, encompassing enhanced digital accessibility, provision of thorough and precise data, expanded public involvement, robust governmental backing, and sufficient safeguarding of data security and privacy.

Based on the above review, the primary challenge encountered by the *LPSE* and the Bima City Government in achieving Website-based Transparency of public procurement data is the insufficient expertise of internal personnel to effectively and transparently manage the website. "The limited budget, personnel, and technical knowledge needed to ensure the completeness of data provision and the sustainability of website management for the realisation of transparency as recommended by MTI are special difficulties for government organisations that are given special authority in that domain" (Interview with Mr. X, Head of the *LPSE* of Bima City, on 14 August 2023). The limited budget, personnel, and technical knowledge required for professional website management is not a naive or contrived reason, as it is a real obstacle that is often faced by government organisations responsible for public procurement.

Insufficient financial resources pose a hindrance to the establishment and upkeep of the technological framework required for an effective procurement website. Acquiring the essential hardware and software, along with the expenses for upkeep and enhancement, can provide a substantial challenge for government bodies operating on constrained budgets. Furthermore, a scarcity of staff might also impede the efficient administration of a procurement website. We need human resources who possess technical knowledge and competence in website management, encompassing tasks such as data updates, security maintenance, and the creation of new features. Nevertheless, several government institutions lack an adequate number of individuals possessing the requisite background and abilities.

Having sufficient technical knowledge is crucial for assuring the thoroughness of data supplied and the long-term viability of website management. Management of technology infrastructure, data security, and system updates require a deep understanding of information technology. If a government organisation does not have sufficient technical expertise, it can be difficult to achieve the expected level of transparency. Recognising these constraints is not a naive or contrived excuse, but rather an acknowledgement of the real challenges faced in implementing transparency in public procurement. It is important to overcome these constraints by allocating adequate resources, engaging technical experts, and increasing the government's commitment to supporting the realisation of greater transparency in public procurement.

The lack of support, commitment, and political will from political elites, especially the Mayor of Bima as the highest authority of local government affairs management, to implement public procurement transparency, including online data publicity, is a factor that needs more attention. The determination of MLI as the Mayor of Bima for the 2018-2023 period as a suspect in an alleged corruption offence in the procurement of goods within the Bima City Government (KPK-RI, 2023) is a stumbling block for the realisation of public procurement transparency there. The naming of MLI as a suspect in a corruption case may raise doubts about the integrity of the procurement process in the Bima City Government. The public and stakeholders may doubt the fairness and transparency of the procurement process, reducing trust in the government and the public procurement system.

The stipulation also affects the effectiveness of the government's ongoing transparency policy, so the next mayor of Bima should evaluate and strengthen the mechanism to monitor the procurement of goods and services to prevent corruption in the future. This process may require policy changes and the formulation of a series of progressive measures to build a more transparent

and accountable system. In other words, overcoming the above obstacles requires collaborative efforts between the *LPSE*, the Bima City Government, and other relevant parties to allocate adequate budgets, improve human resource competencies, and strengthen political commitment for greater transparency in public procurement.

This case exemplifies that public procurement is a highly susceptible area for corruption, especially within government institutions. Multiple variables, including situational pressures, opportunities, psychological characteristics such as rationalisation, and individual capabilities, might contribute to the incidence of fraud in public procurement. The government uses public procurement as a crucial tool to allocate money in a manner that is both effective and efficient. Complying with the enforcement of procurement regulations and processes will improve the calibre of public services (Rustiarini et al., 2019: 345). To tackle these problems, it is imperative to guarantee adherence to procurement regulations and protocols. Following defined protocols fosters transparency, accountability, and equity in the procurement procedure. By following established rules, governments can effectively allocate financial resources and procure goods and services in a manner that meets the needs of the general people.

Transparency is crucial in public procurement policy and legislation as it provides the fundamental rules that govern spending. Public procurement contracting agencies rely on the competitive environment to efficiently allocate their resources, leading to cost reductions, improved quality, and increased innovation in the goods or services offered. The principles of equality, non-discrimination, proportionality, and openness are closely linked and often overlap in their essential functions of ensuring fair, unbiased, and corruption-free processes (Georgieva, 2017: 5). Transparency is an essential component of public procurement policy and legislation. This idea is crucial in establishing the fundamental guidelines that regulate expenditure in public procurement procedures. Transparent public procurement promotes equity, responsibility, and honesty in the utilisation of public monies. Transparency in public procurement fosters a competitive atmosphere, which is one of its main advantages. Transparency in procurement processes by contracting bodies enables a diverse pool of possible providers to engage in the bidding process. The heightened competition can result in decreased prices, as suppliers endeavour to provide the optimal value for customers' money.

Transparency can incentivize suppliers to deliver superior goods or services, as they are aware that their performance will be closely examined by the public and other stakeholders. It aids in the prevention of prejudice and guarantees equal possibilities for all potential providers. Contracting authorities can promote equal participation from all providers by offering transparent and easily understandable information regarding the procurement process, requirements, and evaluation criteria. Transparency is crucial in public procurement to guarantee that the procedures used are fair and justifiable and that the level of transparency is suitable for the particular procurement activity. This measure serves to mitigate the risk of excessive bureaucracy or unwarranted constraints that may impede effectiveness or deter prospective providers. Transparency is a core tenet in the policy and legislation governing public procurement. It fosters a competitive atmosphere, advocates for fairness and equality, guarantees proportionality and aids in the prevention of corruption. By adhering to the principles of transparency, public procurement processes can optimise the utilisation of public budgets and promote innovation in the goods and services provided. Thus, Indonesian local governments can create a strong structure for public procurement that encourages competition, fairness, and integrity. This can be advantageous for both the government and the general people.

CONCLUSION

This article examines the difficulties and barriers encountered in attaining online transparency in Bima City, Indonesia, specifically concerning the procurement activities of the local government. The researchers conducted a case study employing ten MTI-TIAC measures to assess online transparency and underscored the significance of information accessibility. The research emphasises the necessity of impartial assessment and surveillance during the acquisition procedure of commodities and services. It provides a theoretical contribution to the

comprehension of transparency and accountability dynamics in the procurement process of the local government in Indonesia. It recognises multiple barriers that impede the achievement of openness in Bima City. The challenges encompass financial constraints, inadequate staff, and lack of expertise in data providing and website maintenance, namely within the government entity responsible for this domain. The absence of assistance, dedication, and political determination from the political leaders who possess the utmost power in overseeing local government matters, is recognised as a matter that necessitates consideration. The purported corruption associated with the former Mayor has also sparked apprehensions over the probity of the procurement process in Bima City. This case exemplifies the susceptibility of the acquisition of goods and services to corruption, specifically inside government agencies, and highlights the necessity of overcoming obstacles such as resource constraints and political determination to promote integrity and accountability in the procurement procedure.

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