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The Paradox of Digital Transparency in the Implementation of Open Government in Gowa Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the paradox of digital transparency in the implementation of Open Government in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, where strong digital infrastructure has not fully produced substantive public information disclosure. Using a qualitative case study design, the research explores how technological capacity, organizational responsiveness, and cross-sectoral coordination shape transparency outcomes within the Public Information and Documentation Officer (PPID) system. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with seven key informants, consisting of the Main PPID and Assistant PPID administrators from strategic regional agencies, and through document analysis of public information service reports, regulatory documents, standard operating procedures, and PPID data from 2021 to April 2026. The findings show that Gowa Regency has achieved digital sovereignty through an independently managed server and integrated PPID portal, enabling broader formal access to information. However, transparency remains largely procedural due to a 39 percent cumulative rejection rate of information requests, role ambiguity among PPID administrators, fragmented human resource capacity, and weak synchronization between the Main PPID and Assistant PPIDs. The study reveals that digital platforms function more as symbolic instruments when not supported by dedicated personnel, clear institutional roles, responsive procedures, and integrated data governance. These findings confirm that Open Government cannot be realized through technology alone but requires organizational capacity and managerial accountability. The study recommends strengthening functional information management positions, improving inter-agency data integration, and institutionalizing responsive service standards to transform digital transparency into substantive public accountability. The results contribute to local governance studies and practical reform in Indonesia and beyond.

Introduction

Open Government has emerged as one of the most influential governance paradigms in contemporary public administration, emphasizing transparency, participation, and collaboration as essential principles for improving democratic governance and public accountability. Among these principles, transparency occupies a central position because it enables citizens to access government information, monitor public institutions, and evaluate policy implementation. Transparency is widely recognized as a prerequisite for meaningful citizen participation and effective public oversight, thereby contributing to the legitimacy and accountability of government institutions (Sonnenfeld et al., 2024; König et al., 2024; Li, 2025). In the digital era, governments increasingly rely on information and communication

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technologies (ICTs) to improve transparency and facilitate public access to information. Consequently, digital transformation has become a key component of Open Government initiatives across the world (Shenkoya, 2023; Sharmin & Chowdhury, 2025; Balaji, 2025).

The expansion of digital governance has encouraged public institutions to invest heavily in information technology infrastructure, online service platforms, and integrated information management systems. These developments are expected to enhance the efficiency of public administration while simultaneously improving government openness and responsiveness (Rosenbloom et al., 2022; Ansell et al., 2023 Ejjami, 2024). Digital technologies offer opportunities to reduce bureaucratic barriers, accelerate information dissemination, and increase citizen engagement through online platforms. As a result, many governments have adopted digitalization strategies as a means of fulfilling transparency obligations and strengthening accountability mechanisms. However, the relationship between digitalization and transparency remains more complex than often assumed. The availability of technological infrastructure does not automatically guarantee the realization of substantive transparency or effective public accountability (Alnahari & Ariaratnam, 2022; Barsha & Munshi, 2024; Purnamasari et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, the commitment to transparency is institutionalized through Law No. 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, which guarantees citizens' rights to access public information and obliges public bodies to provide information in a timely, accurate, and accessible manner. The implementation of this legislation has encouraged local governments to establish Public Information and Documentation Management Officers (PPID) and develop digital information systems that facilitate public access to government data and documents. These initiatives represent important steps toward strengthening Open Government practices at the local level and enhancing the quality of public services (Azzahra, 2023; Timilehin, 2024; Latupeirissa et al., 2024). Nevertheless, significant disparities remain between the formal availability of information systems and the actual accessibility of public information. Several studies have demonstrated that local governments frequently encounter organizational, managerial, and technical challenges that limit the effectiveness of information disclosure practices.

The case of Gowa Regency in South Sulawesi provides an important context for examining these challenges. Over the past several years, the Gowa Regency Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to digital transformation by developing an independently managed PPID portal supported by a dedicated server infrastructure. This initiative reflects an effort to strengthen local digital governance capacity and reduce dependence on external technological systems. The existence of an autonomous digital infrastructure theoretically provides favorable conditions for enhancing transparency and facilitating public access to information. Through the management of digital information services by the Department of Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Cryptography, Gowa Regency has positioned itself as a local government committed to the modernization of public administration and information management (Veselova et al., 2023; Matemba & Mwandosya, 2023; Mardjun et al.., 2025).

Despite these technological achievements, empirical evidence suggests that improvements in infrastructure have not been fully accompanied by improvements in transparency outcomes. Data from public information service reports indicate considerable fluctuations in the fulfillment of information requests between 2021 and 2024. Although a substantial number of information requests have been approved, a significant proportion have also been denied or rejected. Furthermore, the emergence of information disputes in recent years indicates persistent challenges in information service management and public information disclosure. As

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of April 2026, cumulative data from the PPID portal show that approximately 39 percent of all recorded information requests had been denied. This figure raises important questions regarding the effectiveness of digital governance initiatives in ensuring the fulfillment of citizens' rights to information.

The existence of extensive information inventories and digital platforms alongside relatively high rejection rates reflects a phenomenon that can be described as a digital transparency paradox. On the one hand, digital infrastructure has expanded considerably, providing greater opportunities for information dissemination and service delivery. On the other hand, citizens continue to encounter obstacles when seeking access to public information. This paradox suggests that technological development alone is insufficient to achieve substantive transparency and accountability. Instead, organizational capacity, managerial responsiveness, and institutional coordination appear to play equally important roles in determining the effectiveness of transparency initiatives (Muneeb et al., 2023; Khan, 2025; Mkhitaryan et al., 2026).

Previous studies have documented similar challenges in digital governance implementation. Research conducted in Gowa Regency found that e-government initiatives continue to face constraints related to human resource capacity, organizational readiness, and coordination among government agencies (Anas et al., 2024; Hamka & Hasni, 2025; Herawati et al., 2025). Likewise, studies on public service digitalization have emphasized that technological innovation often progresses more rapidly than the organizational capacity required to manage and utilize it effectively. These findings support the argument that transparency should not be understood solely as a technological outcome but rather as an organizational process requiring effective governance structures, competent personnel, and coordinated administrative systems.

Recent developments in Open Government scholarship have increasingly highlighted the importance of organizational responsiveness and institutional capacity in achieving meaningful transparency. According to Ansari et al. (2022), the success of open government initiatives depends not only on the availability of data but also on the ability of organizations to ensure accessibility, usability, and responsiveness. Similarly, Reggi et al. (2022) argue that many open data initiatives encounter barriers because technological systems are not adequately supported by administrative capabilities and governance mechanisms. In this regard, transparency becomes a dynamic organizational achievement rather than a static technological feature. Public value can only be generated when transparency contributes to genuine accountability and improves government responsiveness to citizen needs (Alexopoulos et al.,2023).

The challenges observed in Gowa Regency are particularly relevant because they illustrate the gap between technological readiness and organizational effectiveness. While the local government has invested substantially in digital infrastructure, issues related to human resource limitations, fragmented responsibilities, and inter-agency coordination continue to influence the quality of public information services. The persistence of information disputes and denied requests indicates that transparency practices remain constrained by managerial and institutional factors. These conditions demonstrate that the success of Open Government initiatives depends not merely on technological sophistication but also on the capacity of organizations to manage information effectively and respond to public demands in a timely manner (Wirtz et al., 2022; Rachmad, 2024; Olatinsu & Eke, 2025).

Examining the paradox of digital transparency in Gowa Regency is both theoretically and practically significant. The case provides an opportunity to explore how investments in digital infrastructure interact with organizational realities in shaping transparency outcomes. More importantly, it contributes to ongoing debates regarding the conditions under which digitalization can be transformed into substantive transparency and public accountability.

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Understanding these dynamics is essential for local governments seeking to move beyond symbolic transparency and establish governance systems capable of fulfilling citizens' rights to information in accordance with the principles of Open Government and the mandate of Indonesia's Public Information Disclosure Law (Porumbescu et al., 2022).

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to examine the phenomenon of the digital transparency paradox in the implementation of Open Government within public information services in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because the research sought to gain an in-depth understanding of organizational processes, managerial dynamics, and institutional challenges underlying the implementation of transparency policies in a specific governmental context. Rather than measuring transparency through quantitative indicators alone, this approach enabled the exploration of how digital infrastructure, organizational capacity, and inter-agency coordination interact in shaping public information services. The case study design further allowed the researchers to investigate the phenomenon within its real-life setting and to capture the complexity of relationships among actors involved in information management and disclosure.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province, focusing on the management of public information through the Public Information and Documentation Officer (PPID) system. Gowa Regency was selected as the research site because it represents an important example of a local government that has invested significantly in digital governance infrastructure, including the establishment of an independently managed PPID portal supported by a dedicated server system. Despite these technological advancements, the region continues to experience challenges in achieving substantive transparency, making it a relevant setting for examining the digital transparency paradox.

Research participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the management and implementation of public information services. This sampling strategy ensured that the selected informants possessed sufficient knowledge and experience regarding the operation of the PPID system and the challenges associated with information disclosure. A total of seven key informants participated in the study. These consisted of the Head of the Main PPID at the Department of Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Cryptography of Gowa Regency, as well as six Assistant PPID managers representing strategic government agencies, namely the Regional Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency, the Department of Education, the Department of Population and Civil Registration, the Department of Tourism and Culture, and the Regional Planning and Development Agency. These institutions were selected because they frequently manage public information requests and play significant roles in supporting transparency initiatives at the local level.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between 2025 and early 2026 using multiple sources of evidence to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the selected informants. The interview process focused on exploring participants' experiences and perspectives regarding information service practices,

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organizational capacity, inter-agency coordination, digital infrastructure utilization, and challenges encountered in responding to public information requests. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to provide flexibility in probing emerging issues while maintaining consistency across interview sessions.

Secondary data were collected through document analysis. The documents reviewed included annual public information service reports from 2021 to 2024, cumulative public information request data updated through April 2026, the Public Information List, relevant Regent Decrees concerning PPID management, standard operating procedures, organizational documents, and policy reports issued by the Department of Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Cryptography. Documentary evidence was used not only to provide contextual information but also to verify and complement findings obtained from interviews.

The data collection process was carried out in several stages. First, the researchers conducted a comprehensive review of official documents to identify patterns in information requests, approval rates, rejection rates, and information disputes. This preliminary analysis helped establish an empirical foundation for understanding the transparency landscape in Gowa Regency. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants to obtain detailed explanations regarding administrative procedures, organizational arrangements, decision-making processes, and barriers to effective information management. Throughout the process, field notes were maintained to capture contextual observations and emerging themes relevant to the study objectives.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The analysis process consisted of three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary materials were carefully reviewed, coded, and organized according to emerging themes related to transparency, organizational responsiveness, and cross-sectoral coordination. This process enabled the researchers to identify recurring patterns and significant issues across different data sources.

The second stage involved data display, whereby coded information was systematically organized into thematic categories to facilitate interpretation and comparison. Data matrices and thematic summaries were used to examine relationships among digital infrastructure, managerial practices, and transparency outcomes. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn through continuous interpretation and verification of findings. The researchers repeatedly compared evidence from interviews and documents to ensure consistency and to refine emerging explanations regarding the digital transparency paradox. This iterative analytical process allowed the development of a comprehensive understanding of how technological capacity and organizational factors influence transparency implementation within the PPID system.

Result and Discussion

The analysis of the effectiveness of public information services in Gowa Regency was conducted using the Open Government conceptual framework. Theoretically, Open Government is a response to the growing demands for transparency and accountability in modern public administration (Lourenço, 2023). Open Government is not merely an administrative tool but a socio-political process involving public participation through the support of information technology. Matheus et al. (2023) identified three main pillars within this framework: transparency, participation, and collaboration. These three form an

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interconnected whole aimed at enhancing bureaucratic effectiveness. However, in the context of this study, the analysis focuses in depth on the pillar of Transparency. This is based on the argument that participation and collaboration cannot be realized without a solid foundation of transparency. Regarding this pillar, Roberts (2023) specifically emphasize that transparency is "the opening of government and administration to the public and the provision of information on administrative processes and data to increase accountability and enable social control." Based on this perspective, transparency is measured not only by the availability of digital infrastructure (such as standalone servers), but also by the extent to which the information provided enhances accountability and enables social control (Wang & Chen, 2022; Mamokhere, 2022; Suresh et al., 2024). To analyze the reality in Gowa Regency, this study breaks down the concept of transparency into three operational indicators: (1) Information Accessibility, (2) Managerial Responsiveness, and (3) Cross-Sectoral Data Synchronization.

From this perspective, transparency is measured not only by the availability of digital infrastructure, but also by the extent to which such information enhances accountability and social control. To examine the reality in Gowa Regency, the following is an analysis based on operational indicators identified in the field:

Information Accessibility: Digital Sovereignty vs. Symbolic Transparency

The first indicator of transparency according to the Open Government framework is accessibility, which measures the extent to which public information is accessible to the public. Gowa Regency has made significant progress through "Digital Sovereignty" by managing its infrastructure independently. This is confirmed by the PPID implementation team, who stated the transition from central government dependence toward local autonomy:

> *"Until 2022, we were still using the Ministry of Home Affairs' server... that's why I sought advice from the Information Commission, and at that time they recommended using our own server... so the management is also handled here... since we migrated the server, there have been no more disruptions."*

Physically, the presence of an independent server and an integrated PPID portal enables broad and rapid access to information. The use of cloud-based technology has also cut down on physical bureaucratic chains between regions:

> *"It's very helpful so now we store those documents in the cloud... delivery is also fast, like from the sub-district to the village; if, for example, we request documents from there, we don't need to go there in person."*

However, research findings reveal a paradox; the availability of this robust technology has not been directly proportional to the fulfillment of substantive information rights. Data from the 2021–2024 service reports show a significant rejection rate of 39%. Furthermore, interview results indicate that the information provision process is not entirely neutral; in some cases, it is influenced by officials' perceptions of the requester's purpose. When the purpose of the request is deemed unclear or potentially leading to certain consequences, officials tend to be more selective in providing information.

> *"Sometimes we need to verify the purpose of the information request, especially if it seems unclear, so we must exercise caution when providing documents."*

This situation indicates that transparency practices are still colored by subjective considerations, which have the potential to affect consistency in fulfilling the right to public information. This phenomenon reinforces the concept of decoupling as proposed by (Lu et al., 2022; Hediger & Vonderau, 2025), which explains the gap between an organization's formal structure and operational practices on the ground. In this context, the presence of relatively

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advanced digital infrastructure, such as standalone servers, has not yet been fully reflected in substantive public information service practices. Digitalization efforts undertaken by local governments tend to serve as a fulfillment of formal aspects in projecting a modern institutional image. However, their implementation still faces various obstacles, such as complex internal procedures and managerial caution in managing the risk of information misuse. Consequently, the use of technology has largely resulted in procedural transparency and has not yet fully transformed into tangible accountability for the public.

Although digital sovereignty has been achieved through independent servers, the quality of information accessibility provided still leaves gaps. In line with this, research (Arif et al., 2026) indicates that the digital communication management of the Gowa District Communication and Information Office, particularly through social media, still requires improvement in terms of publication consistency. This finding suggests that advanced digital infrastructure has not yet been fully accompanied by substantive content strategies. From the perspective of symbolic transparency, the local government's efforts appear more prominent in providing digital "platforms"; however, as noted, the quality of messages and the consistency of their publication remain challenges in truly achieving transparent external relations with the public.

Managerial Responsiveness: Role Ambiguity and Human Resource Fragmentation

The transparency pillar within the Open Government framework demands the timely provision of information. Research findings reveal that the primary obstacle to responsiveness at the Gowa Regency Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo-SP) stems from a human resources assignment structure that has not yet been specifically institutionalized. Based on interviews with the main PPID administrator, it was found that staff members handle information services as an additional responsibility (collateral duty) outside their primary duties. This was confirmed by a source from the PPID implementation team:

> *"At Kominfo itself, managing the PPID isn't actually a primary duty... Our functional roles here are statistics and cryptography. The PPID is an additional duty attached to our positions. To be honest, our focus is often divided between managing sectoral data and handling public information requests."*

This ambiguity in roles leads to a fragmentation of operational focus. Staff tend to prioritize sector-specific technical tasks that have more urgent and administratively measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). As a result, the response time to information requests is often neglected due to limited time and manpower. The impact of this overlapping workload is explained further:

> *"Sometimes a request comes in when we're in the middle of verifying sectoral statistical data or handling information security. Ultimately, the time available for conducting a consequence assessment or simply responding to the request becomes very limited. We have to split our time, and sometimes information services take a backseat to primary duties in our respective fields."*

The 39% rate of information denials can be interpreted as a "quick administrative decision" made by officials to avoid the risk of disputes arising from delays, given that a comprehensive document impact assessment process requires a significant amount of time. From the perspective of Chen & Grossklags (2022), this situation undermines the value of transparency by hindering the public's ability to exercise actual social control. Without dedicated officials focused on the of information management, public service responsiveness in Gowa Regency remains reactive and has not yet met the ideal standards of Open Government (Agu et al., 2024; Olatinsu & Eke, 2025). This ambiguity of roles is reinforced by the findings of Nyai Kurnia's research (Wati et al., 2022), which underscores that the implementation of e-Government at

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the Gowa Regency Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo-SP) is indeed still hindered by limitations in the technical capabilities of human resources as well as a lack of training for Assistant PPIDs. This explains why managerial responsiveness in information services has not been optimal; the limitations in competence and budgetary support identified by (Wati et al., 2022) are the fundamental reasons why Primary PPID officers tend to be bogged down in sectoral administrative tasks rather than focusing on public information service functions.

The impact of this fragmented focus and these technical barriers reached a critical point in 2024, when an information dispute arose triggered by a requester's objection. This dispute occurred because the Gowa Regency PPID failed to provide a formal response to the objection submitted by the requester. Based on the findings, this was caused by systemic administrative constraints, namely the absence of a request registration number in the applicant's system, so the objection was not detected for follow-up.

The emergence of this dispute due to the registration failure underscores that ambiguity in the roles of administrators leads to oversight of procedural details being neglected. When staff must divide their time between their primary duties in statistics and cryptography, administrative accuracy in managing the information request cycle from registration to responding to objections becomes vulnerable to negligence. This dispute serves as empirical evidence that without fully dedicated human resources, the sovereignty of Gowa's digital infrastructure remains at risk of maladministration that undermines public rights.

Looking at the structure outlined in the Regent's Decree No. 180/II/2023 and No. 168/I/2023, it is evident that the administrative structure of the PPID has indeed been established, ranging from the Supervisor to the Online Admin Team. However, referring to the list of positions within the agency:

Table 1. Organizational Structure of the Public Information and Documentation Officer (PPID) System in Gowa Regency

Position	Position Within the Agency
Supervisor	Regent of Gowa; Deputy Regent of Gowa
Advisors	Regional Secretary of Gowa Regency
Balance Team	Assistant for Government and Public Welfare, Gowa Regency Regional Secretariat; Assistant for General Administration, Gowa Regency Regional Secretariat; Assistant for Economic Affairs and Development, Gowa Regency Regional Secretariat; Inspector of the Gowa Regency Inspectorate
Chief Public Information Officer	Head of the Gowa Regency Department of Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography
Assistant PPID	Secretaries of Departments/Agencies, Division Heads, and Subdistrict Heads throughout Gowa Regency
Online Admin Team	Individuals appointed in each Department, Agency, Division, and Subdistrict throughout Gowa Regency

Although the organizational structure is complete according to regulations (Regent's Decree), the reality on the ground shows that these positions are ex officio or held concurrently. Officials appointed as Primary PPIDs or Online Administrators are those who already have heavy structural workloads in their respective departments. This further reinforces the argument that the main challenge to responsiveness in Gowa Regency is not the absence of a legal framework

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or technology, but rather the absence of functional position designs that allow administrators to work specifically and focus on the mandate of information disclosure.

Cross-Sectoral Data Synchronization: The Dynamics of the Chief and Assistant PPIDs

Transparency within the Open Government framework requires seamless and integrated data collaboration. In Gowa Regency, a stark disparity in authority was observed between the Main PPID, which controls the technological infrastructure, and the Assistant PPIDs within the technical SKPDs, who are the custodians of substantive data. Although the Main PPID has established a digital portal, data supply remains heavily dependent on the willingness and speed of manual coordination from the relevant SKPDs. This was confirmed by a source from the Main PPID:

> *"We certainly communicate and coordinate with the relevant agencies, because we, as the Main PPID, prepare the documentation and information, but it is those agencies that prepare the documents… The challenge is that sometimes agencies are slow to respond to information requests that we forward."*

The lack of an automated data integration mechanism means the information verification process must go through a manual bureaucratic chain. To bridge this technological gap, the Main PPID administrators use informal communication channels as their primary coordination tool, though this method has not yet ensured data timeliness:

> *"We have a WhatsApp admin group where we've added all SKPD representatives... Coordination happens through the WhatsApp group, or we go directly to them if there's information, or they come here with the documents."*

Obstacles in synchronizing this data flow often cause the Main PPID to face a responsiveness dilemma. Information disputes that arise generally stem from delays by the Assistant PPIDs in supplying data, so that the objection mechanisms filed by applicants are not addressed promptly. This phenomenon reinforces Albert Meijer's (2009) thesis on the "technological fix," which argues that no matter how significant the technological investment (such as owning a dedicated server), it cannot produce substantive transparency without reforms in coordination management. Without mandatory and automated data integration policies, the digital infrastructure owned by Gowa Regency functions merely as a static storage medium, while its transparency processes remain trapped in the sluggishness of manual bureaucracy.

The impact of these barriers to cross-sectoral data flow synchronization is clearly reflected in public information fulfillment statistics over the past two years. According to information service reports, in 2023, 13 requests were fully granted, but 10 requests were denied or rejected. The primary reason for these rejections, as stated in the PPID report, is that the requested information falls outside the authority of Gowa Regency's PPID or is not under its control.

The phenomenon of rejections based on the reason "information is not under its control" confirms the existence of challenges in data mapping at the level of the Assistant PPIDs (technical SKPDs). Reliance on manual coordination has made it difficult for the Main PPID to quickly verify the status of data across various departments. Consequently, when the service timeframe stipulated by the KIP Law expires while substantive data has not yet been synchronized from the relevant SKPDs, the request is administratively forced to be denied.

This situation shows an improving trend in 2024, where the total number of fully granted requests was recorded at 11, while the number of requests denied or rejected decreased to 5. Although there was a decrease in the rejection rate, the existence of rejections on the grounds of "information not under control" still indicates that the main challenge lies not in the availability of the portal, but in the integration of the Public Information List (DIP), which

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should be automatically synchronized across agencies. This underscores that digital sovereignty in Gowa Regency must be accompanied by the standardization of a linear data flow. If synchronization between the Main and Assistant PPIDs continues to rely on informal relationships and the goodwill of individual work units, the quality of transparency will remain inconsistent and heavily dependent on the responsiveness of each sectoral agency, rather than on the robustness of the technological systems that have been established.

Transformation Toward Real Accountability

Comparing field findings with Open Government standards reveals that Gowa Regency currently remains at the stage of procedural transparency. Digital sovereignty through the ownership of independent servers is indeed a crucial modality for ensuring data security and autonomy, as emphasized by a source who stated, "since we migrated the servers, there have been no further disruptions." However, without the support of a responsive organizational structure, this technology has not yet fully transformed into public value.

The root of the problem identified is a gap between infrastructure advancement and human resource capacity. The absence of functional officials with a full-time commitment has caused public information services to become trapped in fragmented focus. Officials caught between

sectoral technical tasks and PPID functions tend to make defensive "administrative choices" to avoid the risk of disputes amid time constraints. This is reflected in the administrators' acknowledgment that their work focus is often divided, which in turn affects the quality-of-service responsiveness.

Furthermore, the reliance on manual coordination through informal communication channels between government agencies indicates that the Open Government system has not yet been systematically institutionalized. As a result, the transparency achieved tends to be symbolic in nature, where the digital infrastructure appears active, yet access to substantive data still faces procedural obstacles. This phenomenon is underscored by the continued occurrence of information denials on administrative grounds, as well as the emergence of information disputes due to technical-registration obstacles over the past two years. This serves as an empirical indicator that without reliable data integration and procedural certainty, the transparency process remains vulnerable to managerial obstacles.

The existence of disputes and obstacles in information access demonstrates that Gowa Regency is currently in a crucial phase toward achieving genuine accountability. As noted by Dameri (2023), public value is only created when transparency generates tangible accountability through active responsiveness. To move in that direction, strategic steps are needed, such as restructuring workloads through the creation of specialized functional positions for information managers and aligning SOPs that require automatic data synchronization between the Main and Assistant PPIDs.

Only through the strengthening of managerial governance and an open organizational culture will the digital infrastructure built with significant investment not merely become a static technological tool, but rather a means of fulfilling the public's right to information in a responsive, accountable, and sustainable manner, in accordance with the mandate of Law No. 14 of 2008.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the existence of a digital transparency paradox in the implementation of Open Government in Gowa Regency, where substantial investments in digital infrastructure and the achievement of technological sovereignty through an independent server and integrated PPID portal have not yet translated into substantive transparency and public accountability.

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The findings reveal that although digital platforms have improved the formal accessibility of public information, transparency remains largely procedural, as reflected in the persistent rejection of information requests and the emergence of information disputes. Furthermore, organizational challenges, including role ambiguity, dual responsibilities among PPID administrators, and fragmented human resource capacity, have limited managerial responsiveness and hindered the timely fulfillment of citizens' information rights. The study also identifies weak cross-sectoral data synchronization between the Main PPID and Assistant PPIDs, resulting in delays, inconsistencies, and administrative barriers in information provision. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of Open Government is determined not solely by the availability of digital technologies but by the extent to which organizational structures, human resource capacities, and data governance mechanisms support responsive and integrated information management. Therefore, strengthening dedicated information management functions, clarifying institutional roles, and establishing systematic data integration across government agencies are essential steps to transform digital transparency from a symbolic administrative practice into a substantive mechanism for enhancing public accountability and democratic governance.

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