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The Importance of Transparency and Governance in Contemporary Public Management

A Importância da Transparência e Governança na Gestão Pública Contemporânea
La Importancia de la Transparencia y la Gobernanza en la Gestión Pública Contemporánea

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Abstract:
This article analyzes the importance of active transparency and governance in contemporary public administration as essential tools for efficiency, combating corruption, and strengthening democracy. Based on a conceptual review, the text explores the dimensions of transparency (active and passive) and their role in structuring social oversight by citizens. It also discusses the operational and structural challenges involved in implementing a culture of transparency, such as the persistence of secrecy, technological limitations, and the use of inaccessible language. It concludes that adopting governance practices and robust mechanisms for access to information is not merely a legal obligation, but a fundamental strategic choice to ensure accountability in the management of public resources and restore society's trust in state institutions.

Keywords:
Public Governance. Active Transparency. Social Oversight. Public Administration. Compliance.

Resumo:
O presente artigo analisa a importância da transparência ativa e da governança na administração pública contemporânea como ferramentas essenciais para a eficiência, combate à corrupção e fortalecimento democrático. A partir de uma revisão conceitual, o texto explora as dimensões da transparência (ativa e passiva) e seu papel na estruturação do controle social por parte dos cidadãos. Discutem-se, também, os desafios operacionais e estruturais para a implementação de uma cultura de transparência, como a persistência do sigilo, limitações tecnológicas e o uso de linguagem inacessível. Conclui-se que a adoção de práticas de governança e de mecanismos robustos de acesso à informação não é apenas uma obrigação legal, mas uma escolha estratégica fundamental para garantir a responsabilidade na gestão dos recursos públicos e resgatar a confiança da sociedade nas instituições estatais.

Palavras-chave:
Governança Pública. Transparência Ativa. Controle Social. Administração Pública. Compliance.

Resumen:
El presente artículo analiza la importancia de la transparencia activa y de la gobernanza en la administración pública contemporánea como herramientas esenciales para la eficiencia, la lucha contra la corrupción y el fortalecimiento democrático. A partir de una revisión conceptual, el texto explora las dimensiones de la transparencia (activa y pasiva) y su papel en la estructuración del control social por parte de los ciudadanos. También se discuten los desafíos operativos y estructurales para implementar una cultura de transparencia, como la persistencia del secreto, las limitaciones tecnológicas y el uso de un lenguaje inaccesible. Se concluye que la adopción de prácticas de gobernanza y de mecanismos sólidos de acceso a la información no es solo una obligación legal, sino una elección estratégica fundamental para garantizar la

responsabilidad en la gestión de los recursos públicos y recuperar la confianza de la sociedad en las instituciones estatales.

Palabras clave:
Gobernanza Pública. Transparencia Activa. Control Social. Administración Pública. Compliance.

1. Introduction

Contemporary public administration faces the constant challenge of reinventing itself to meet society's growing demands for integrity, efficiency, and accountability in the use of collective resources. At the heart of this transformation, active transparency and public governance stand out as indispensable pillars for consolidating a truly democratic and efficient State.

Far from being merely theoretical concepts, these practices are operational tools that transform the relationship between citizens and the state apparatus. The objective of this scientific article is to analyze how the implementation of robust mechanisms for social oversight, government transparency, and compliance practices directly contributes to combating corruption, increasing legal certainty, and improving public services. From the perspective of administrative science, it discusses how free access to information and the structuring of clear decision-making processes legitimize the actions of public administrators and strengthen the democratic environment.

2. Public Governance and the Principle of Transparency

Governance in the public sector refers to the set of leadership, strategy, and control mechanisms put into practice to assess, direct, and monitor management, focusing on delivering valuable services and goods to society. While governance establishes strategic guidelines and the limits of institutional action, transparency acts as the vector that exposes these processes to public scrutiny, ensuring that administrative acts are guided by morality, impartiality, and legality.

Transparency is fundamentally divided into two complementary dimensions:

- **Active Transparency:** The proactive disclosure of information of public interest at the initiative of the agency itself, regardless of requests (such as data on transparency portals, management reports, and procurement tables);

• **Passive Transparency:** The provision of specific information in response to demands and individual requests made by citizens, supported by specific access-to-information legislation.

Governance Pillar	Practical Description	Direct Impact on Management
Transparency	Broad, clear, and timely access to financial and decision-making information.	Facilitates social oversight and inhibits ethical and operational misconduct.
Integrity (Compliance)	Alignment of behaviors and processes with rules and ethical values.	Reduces fraud risks and increases the legal compliance of official acts.
Accountability	Clear reporting and acceptance of responsibility for decisions.	Increases managers' legitimacy and public trust.

3. The Role of Social Oversight and Legislation

The strengthening of public transparency has been significantly driven by modern regulatory frameworks, which have made secrecy the exception and access to information the rule. Social oversight — society's active participation in monitoring the use of public resources — depends directly on the quality and clarity of the information made available by state agencies.

When citizens have access to accessible channels and understandable data, they act as partners of official oversight bodies (such as Courts of Accounts and Comptroller's Offices), identifying failures and suggesting improvements in service delivery. This synergy not only inhibits unlawful practices, but also directs public spending toward the real priorities identified by the local community.

4. Challenges in Implementing Active Transparency

Despite undeniable progress, the consolidation of a culture of full transparency encounters chronic operational and structural challenges in the public service. The main barriers include:

• **Culture of Secrecy:** The persistence of a traditional bureaucratic mentality that views public information as the property of the State or public servant, rather than of the citizen;

• **Technological Limitations:** Outdated information systems, lack of database interoperability, and government portals that are difficult to navigate or contain unstructured data;

- **Excessively Technical Language:** The disclosure of reports and financial statements in legalese or financial jargon that is difficult for ordinary citizens to understand, undermining the effectiveness of transparency.

Overcoming these barriers requires continuous investment in training administrative teams to use digital tools, as well as adopting plain-language techniques in institutional communication.

5. Final Considerations

Transparency and governance should not be regarded as mere legal obligations to be fulfilled bureaucratically by public agencies, but as indispensable strategic choices for achieving operational efficiency and social justice. Open data and stronger integrity mechanisms foster a public administration that is more resilient, confident in the lawfulness of its actions, and aligned with the demands of modernity.

By investing in corporate governance adapted to the public sector, the State not only mitigates risks and improves the use of its scarce resources, but also restores citizens' trust in democratic institutions, paving the way for sustainable and ethical socioeconomic development.

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