

EDITORIAL: Governance in transition: The intersection of transparency, accountability and artificial intelligence

Dear readers!

On behalf of the editorial team, I am pleased to present the second issue of volume 1 (2024) of the journal *Reporting and Accountability Review*. The current issue features a few scholarly articles investigating and highlighting nontrivial research topics like voluntary disclosure quality, the transformation path of public administration, with particular attention to local realities, and the adoption of artificial intelligence algorithms in various sectors of our society.

In today's rapidly evolving world, both public and private sector organizations face growing pressures to adapt and innovate in response to complex challenges. These challenges, whether arising from crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing demand for efficient and transparent governance, or the need to modernize through technological advancements, require organizations to rethink traditional practices and embrace new approaches.

One crucial aspect of this transformation is the growing emphasis on transparency and accountability. In times of crisis, organizations are expected to provide clear, timely, and relevant information to stakeholders. High-quality voluntary disclosure has become an essential tool in maintaining trust and ensuring that stakeholders remain informed, even in the face of uncertainty. This requirement for openness, while often seen as a matter of corporate governance, extends far beyond the private sector. Governments, too, must evolve their communication and operational strategies to meet the needs of a public that demands greater insight into decision-making processes, especially during times of disruption.

Alongside the push for greater transparency, the public sector is undergoing a broader shift toward more efficient, results-oriented management. The move from traditional bureaucratic models to more dynamic, managerial approaches is at the heart of public sector reforms globally. As governments struggle with the complex challenges of modern societies, they are increasingly adopting frameworks that emphasize accountability and efficiency. This shift is not merely about improving operational performance but also about responding to the expectations of citizens who demand better outcomes, particularly in local governance where services are felt most directly.

Technology, particularly artificial intelligence, is playing an increasingly pivotal role in shaping these reforms. Artificial intelligence offers the potential to radically transform the functioning of both public and private organizations, improving service delivery, optimizing decision-making, and enhancing overall efficiency. As artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into public administration, it contributes to new opportunities for modernization. However, the integration of artificial intelligence also requires a thoughtful approach, balancing innovation with the potential challenges of ensuring ethical practices, data security, and equitable access.

These broader trends, i.e., transparency in times of crisis, modernization of governance structures, and the integration of technology, are not isolated; instead, they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing in an ongoing interaction. For instance, as governments and organizations adopt more advanced technologies, they must also ensure that their processes are transparent and accountable to build trust with the public. Similarly, the shift toward more efficient and results-oriented management requires leveraging technologies that can streamline operations and enhance decision-making.

In this context, organizations must continuously adapt to maintain relevance and fulfil their obligations to stakeholders. The evolving landscape demands

a commitment to not only improving operational efficiency but also embracing ethical governance and leveraging innovation to meet the needs of the public.

Whether in response to external pressures, technological advances, or the changing expectations of stakeholders, these efforts are essential for fostering trust, ensuring sustainability, and creating long-term value.

*Ilaria Galavotti, Ph.D., Assistant Professor,
Department of Economic and Social Sciences (DiSes),
Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Piacenza, Italy,
Editorial Board member, Reporting and Accountability Review*