

# Determinants of overall public trust in local government: meditation of government response to COVID-19 in Indonesian context

Perceived  
response to  
COVID-19

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to empirically investigate the relationship of perceived transparency, perceived accountability and perceived responsiveness with overall public trust in local government. Moreover, it addressed the “why” and “how” questions about the existence of this relationship by examining the underlying mechanism of the government response to COVID-19.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Quantitative research design is applied in the current study. Data was collected from two cities situated in Indonesia via a cross-sectional survey at local administration levels. The final data set of 330 respondents was then analyzed using Smart partial least square (PLS)3 by testing through the measurement and structural model.

**Findings** – Results revealed positive associations among the study variables. Also, the mediatory role of the government response to COVID-19 was supported by the results.

**Originality/value** – This study aims to bring awareness and contribution in the body of knowledge about the importance of elements of good governance in building and sustaining public trust in local governments based on the fact that in countries such as Indonesia, there is a dearth of literature in this context. Further, it provides strategic and practical suggestions to the state regarding the advantages of using good governance practices in their communication with citizens in certain and uncertain situations, especially nowadays during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords** Government perceived response to COVID-19, Overall public trust in local government, Perceived transparency, Perceived accountability, Perceived responsiveness, Government response to COVID-19

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

In the contemporary world, one of the most prominent and important concerns is the vibrant nature and role of the government and the process of governance (Purwanto *et al.*, 2020). People always seek for maintenance of their rights (human and democratic) from their



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government. Also, they want their government to be responsible for their actions to make sure that the needs of the citizens are fulfilled in their best interest (Beshi and Kaur, 2020). Therefore, due to the diverse functions and nature of the local governments (Chakiri *et al.*, 2020), while making decisions, the interests of the majority lie in the main concern of the state in a democratic foundation (Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.*, 2013). For that reason, the trust of the public in the government is considered to be an imperative part of the democratic system. Therefore, governments focus on the improvement of public trust at all levels by implementing strategies and policies effectively and efficiently (Houston and Harding, 2013).

Due to the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments were apprehensive about the measures to be taken to minimize the spread of the virus and the resultant response of the citizens against those measures (Fetzer *et al.*, 2020). However, people across many nations were not satisfied with the government perceived response toward COVID-19 (Hale *et al.*, 2020). This perception affects the trust level of the public in the government based on citizens' worry about their health and many other matters but with the passage of time, an enhanced public trust was reported after their government announced several measures in the public interest (Fetzer *et al.*, 2020).

An extensive study of the literature revealed that there are studies available related to the impact of transparency (Porumbescu, 2015) accountability (Farwell *et al.*, 2019; Yang and Northcott, 2019) and responsiveness (Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2017) on the overall public trust in local government but there is a dearth of literature in which, the association of all these elements is tested on overall trust of citizens in local government generally and in context of Indonesia specifically. Also, to the best of researchers' knowledge, there is not any research investigating the mediatory role of the response of the government to COVID-19 in between the association of elements of transparency, accountability and responsiveness and the public's overall trust in local government.

Therefore, to fill this gap particularly in the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the current study aims to investigate the association of transparency, accountability and responsiveness with the government's perceived response to COVID 19 and the resultant trust level of the citizens in local governments. To achieve this objective, the current study is established on a quantitative methodology by conducting a survey among the public of two cities in Indonesia, i.e. Banjarmasin city (South Kalimantan Province) and Medan city (North Sumatera Province). The results of the study will provide valuable insights for practitioners and future researchers to explore more facts related to the area of the study.

### Review of related literature

The notion of *trust* may have multiple hues of value (Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.*, 2013; Nedal and Alcoriza, 2018). Besides these diverse opinions, scholars accepted trust as a psychological condition, which involves a readiness to take risks depending upon the trustees' positive behavioral expectations. *Trust in government*, therefore, "refers to citizens' expectations on the type, operation and interaction of government with the citizenry and the behavior of political leaders, civil servants and citizens themselves" (Cheema, 2011). Contrarily, Thomas (1998) asserts that the main foundation of trust is a belief, not expectations, as expectations weaken the level of trust and beliefs make it stronger. According to Barnes and Gill (2000), "trust in government refers to the level of confidence citizens have in their government to 'do the right thing', to act appropriately and honestly on behalf of the public." The criteria and parameters for improved potential performance in public services has been viewed by a number of theorists as precursors to trust in government institutions (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2005). Citizens view government performance not only from the perspective of service delivery but also from the efficacy and fairness of government policy and government ethics (Yang and Holzer, 2006).

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Trust in government or public services is typically measured in terms of citizens' subjective judgments based on their experience, suggesting that citizens' trust will arise when a government or its public service is viewed by citizens as competent, reliable and honest, while also meeting their needs (Park and Blenkinsopp, 2011)

Exploring the reasons for declining public trust in government, Thomas (1998) presented that public trust in government institutions when citizens sufficiently monitor and control governments' performance, suggesting that the establishment of trust among citizens is vital for the smooth functioning of the overall country. Welch *et al.* (2005) stated that trust in public institutions is enhanced through their administrative rules and regulations relating to the provision of services and information. While others demonstrate that citizen's satisfaction with the quality of public services is associated with their trust in government (Zhao and Hu, 2017). The above literature grounded in theories has explained the overall main factors beyond the three major factors under consideration in the current study. However, the current study examines the association between good governance practices (perceived transparency, perceived accountability and perceived responsiveness of the government) with overall public trust in local government.

#### *Association of transparency, accountability, responsiveness and overall public trust in local government*

Transparency refers to fairness and disclosure of all facts and figures related to a particular matter (Farwell *et al.*, 2019) and is considered to be the solution of most of the issues of democratic government by increasing the trust level of the public in local government (Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, governments make multiple efforts to establish transparency in the process of administration to win the trust of the citizens (Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.*, 2013; Porumbescu, 2015). This view is based on the notion that disclosure of information allows citizens to understand the motives behind government decisions (Basyal *et al.*, 2018; Mansoor *et al.*, 2020b). Therefore, based on the fact that transparency facilitates the public to have a better insight of the government efforts resulting into the strengthening of trust level, it is proposed that:

*H1.* Perceived transparency is significantly associated with overall public trust in local government.

The element of accountability is an imperative aspect of good governance (Rahaman, 2008). "Accountability is defined as to what extent one should be answerable to their higher authority, officials or public for his actions" (Russell, 2019). Accountability plays an imperative role in the creation of citizens' trust in the government (Cheema, 2011; Yamamori, 2019; Yousaf *et al.*, 2016). Farwell *et al.* (2019), revealed that perceptions of accountability are directly related to the public trust in local government; when governments are fair with the general public, then they develop a level of trust among the public for the government. Similarly, Yang and Northcott (2019) explained that accountability of information provided by the government is a great source of building trust in local governments by the general public. Thus, based on the above literature and the importance of perceived accountability practices in building public trust in local government, it is hypothesized that:

*H2.* Perceived accountability is significantly associated with overall public trust in local government.

Many scholars reported that the responsiveness of government significantly impacts the trust of the public in local governments (Yousaf *et al.*, 2016). Brillantes and Fernandez (2011) stated that responsive governance plays a vital role in the rebuilding of trust in government. Beshi and Kaur (2020) revealed that there is a positive association between the perceived

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responsiveness and trust of citizens in the local government. Thus, based on literature review and considering perceived practices of responsiveness as an imperative element impacting the public trust level in local government, it is hypothesized that:

*H3.* Perceived responsiveness is significantly associated with overall public trust in local government.

*Association of transparency, accountability, responsiveness and government perceived response to COVID-19*

The rapid spread of COVID-19 globally has created a wide range of responses from governments. An extensive study of the literature reveals that the public's perception of government response toward natural disasters or uncertain situations is dependent upon the good governance practices of the local government (Karp and Banducci, 2008). Further, Shvetsova *et al.* (2020) stated that policy responsiveness is the major determinant of the government response to the pandemic situation. Additionally, Ojiagu *et al.* (2020) examine the relationship of accountability and transparency in nation-building using the COVID-19 experience as a yardstick and found that both significantly impact the response of the government in uncertain situations while making decisions in the best interest of the public. As there is limited research available regarding the government response to COVID-19, particularly its association with all three elements of good governance in a single study, therefore, to fill this gap in the literature, we hypothesize that:

*H4.* Perceived transparency is significantly associated with perceived government response to COVID-19 (PGRC).

*H5.* Perceived accountability is significantly associated with PGRC.

*H6.* Perceived responsiveness is significantly associated with PGRC.

*The relationship between perceived government response to COVID-19 and overall public trust in local government*

In response to COVID-19, different nations responded differently in terms of measures taken at the country level and in terms of timely response to this pandemic situation (Hale *et al.*, 2020), which resulted in a debate among the public, as well as policymakers. Henderson *et al.* (2020) investigated the medical and health sciences field and found that government response to COVID-19 plays a very vital role in shaping up the trust level of the public in government measures. Similarly, Gates (2020) stated that to gain public trust, governments need to respond promptly and accurately in different matters, particularly in the context of the health of the citizens. Therefore, it is important for governments to respond timely to overcome the stress, anxiety and emotional as well behavioral difficulties among the public and to gain their trust for long-term sustainability (Germani *et al.*, 2020). As stated by Houston and Harding (2013), for the smooth working of the overall system, trust is an imperative requirement. Finally, based on the fact that the provision of valid response by the government fosters citizens' trust in their government, it is proposed:

*H7.* PGRC is significantly associated with overall public trust in local government.

## Mediation

*Perceived government response to COVID-19 as an underlying mechanism between transparency, accountability, responsive and overall public trust in local government*

The main aim of the transparency from the government is always to create an understanding among the public about decision-making processes of the government and resultant outcomes for citizens further leading toward better trust in local government (Porumbescu, 2015). Governments used multiple media to disburse information to the public to remain transparent at all levels and to show the intention of accountability toward the citizens (Beshi and Kaur, 2020). Also, accountability of information provided by the government is a great source of building trust in local governments by the general public (Yang and Northcott, 2019). Responsive governance plays a vital role in the rebuilding of trust in the government (Brillantes and Fernandez, 2011). Additionally, research revealed the impact of responsiveness on government response to COVID-19 and the impact of transparency and accountability in government response to COVID-19 (Ojiagu *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, Liao *et al.* (2020) and Sawatsuk *et al.* (2018) reported the positive association between government response to COVID-19 and overall public trust in local government. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the mediatory rule of government response to COVID-19. Therefore, we posit that:

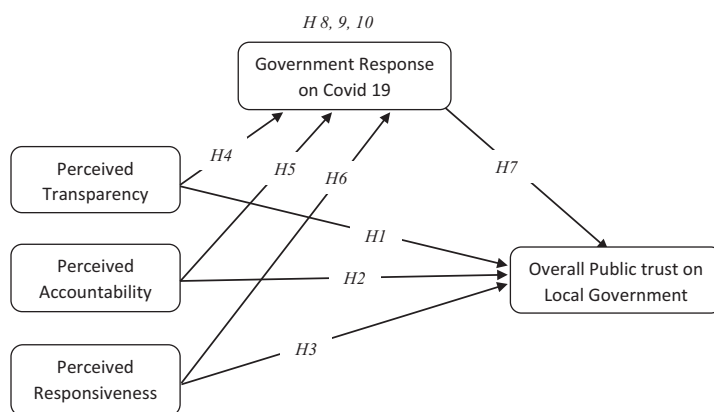
H8. PGRC will mediate the association between perceived transparency and overall public trust in local government.

H9. PGRC will mediate the association between perceived accountability and overall public trust in local government.

H10. PGRC will mediate the association between perceived responsiveness and overall public trust in local government (Figure 1).

### *Theoretical framework.*

Research methodology to empirically examine the hypothesized links, a quantitative cross-sectional design single-site survey was conducted among the citizens of two cities in Indonesia, i.e. Banjarmasin city (South Kalimantan Province) and Medan city (North Sumatera Province). Although longitudinal studies are preferred for such construct's



**Figure 1.**  
Theoretical  
framework of the  
study

measurement but due to sudden emergence and situation, unpredictability authors were unable to plan a longitudinal study design. However, few cross-sectional studies are conducted previously, which provide useful insights about the phenomenon under investigation in this research framework (Arshad and Khurram, 2020; Brillantes and Fernandez, 2011). As per statistics of 2020, the population of Banjarmasin city is 732,005 (42.5% men and 57.5% women). While one of the most populated cities of Indonesia i.e. Medan city has a population of 2,337,958 (45% men and 55% women). A convenience random sampling technique was used through data collectors in different lowest administrative units and public locations of both cities where most of the educated class people were living. Hence, the respondents were approached randomly and were requested to complete the survey. Upon their voluntary willingness to participate in a survey, they were explained about the purpose of the survey and anonymity was ensured to them. Once authors were satisfied that respondents can understand and answer adequately, they were handed over a survey to record responses. Those who were not able to understand the survey language were not requested to fill up the survey. By this procedure, the authors ensured that the right people participated in the survey. The language of the questionnaire was English as English is taught in Indonesia from the primary level and Indonesian citizens can easily read and understand English language. Hence, the originally developed survey with good reported reliability were adopted. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha clearly indicates that the questionnaire was well-understood by the respondents. Hence, the authors felt no need for translation and back translation of the questionnaire into the local language. Moreover, Arshad and Khurram (2020) have successfully adopted the survey in different cultures. In total, 450 questionnaires were distributed i.e. 200 in Banjarmasin city and 250 in Medan City. The whole process of data collection took approximately eight weeks. Out of 450 questionnaires, 349 questionnaires were received back, representing a response rate of 77.7%. In total, 19 more incomplete and unengaged responses were excluded from further analysis. Therefore, the remaining 330 (120 from Banjarmasin city and 210 from Medan city) questionnaires were included in the current study analysis, thus generating a final response rate of 73.33%.

#### *Measures of the study*

The measurement of trust remains an issue; many studies rely on survey data gathered by others, typically governments and in the past, as there were no commonly used scales, this inhibits comparison of results from different studies (Cook and Gronke, 2005). Bouckaert and Van de Walle (2003) noted a trend to use measures of trust and measures of citizen satisfaction as proxy measures for good governance, which risks conflating variables, which later on the study of Park and Blenkinsopp (2011) had treated as distinct. Despite these issues, the scales used in the present study for measuring overall public trust on government were clearly robust and assessed using five items, based on the operational definition that residents' trust is a subjective judgment on a government's integrity, goodwill and competence, adopted from (Park and Blenkinsopp, 2011) and used by many scholars (Arshad and Khurram, 2020; Beshi and Kaur, 2020). Additionally, in accordance to a World Bank Report (2020), one of the subjective measure of the trust is through perception survey applied by most of the scholars based on confidence, performance and effectiveness of the government actions where the questions are asked regarding trust level of citizens on government (Kumagai and Ilorio, 2020). The reliability of the perceived trust scale was 0.861. The sample item includes "public authorities in the city administration are acting in the interest of the public." Perceived transparency was measured with a four-item scale adapted from (Park and Blenkinsopp, 2011), perceived accountability was measured with a

four-item scale adapted from (Said *et al.*, 2015), perceived responsive was measured with a five-item scale adapted from (Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval, 2003) and PGRC was measured with a 12-item scale adopted from (Conway *et al.*, 2020). A five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” was used to assess the responses.

### *Respondents' characteristics*

The demographic statistics of respondents showed that the majority of them (65.3%) were men than women (34.7%). In total, 62.1% were from age bracket of 20–30 years and 22% were in the age bracket of 31–40 years. Only 8% of respondents were above 50 years of age. In total, 54% of the respondents were graduates, 31.5% were undergraduate and 14.5% were highly qualified. In total, 34.4% of the respondents belonged to the low-income category, 45.3% were middle class and 20.3% were from upper-middle and upper class. In response to a general question about their affiliation with any political party, most of them (64.7%) replied neutral, indicating that the selected sample for the current study is highly representative of the general public as a whole.

### **Data analysis and results**

This study used statistical product and service solutions version 25 to perform descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to find out the information about control variables. ANOVA results revealed that none of the demographic variables had a significant effect on the dependent variable therefore, no demographic was controlled during further analysis. Due to this insignificance, this study was also unable to determine the individual or collective differences in the study variable for a given sample. Especially demographic differences between male and female, between younger and older, between undergraduate and postgraduates people perceptions about responsiveness, accountability, transparency and trust on government. To analyze the results, SmartPLS3 was used. Tests of validity and reliability were performed to establish the discriminant validity among variables. Descriptive and correlational analyzes were performed. To test the proposed hypotheses, measurement and structural models were analyzed by applying different tests. To test the model, data was collected from a single source. The respondents were told about the anonymity of their responses to the items in the questionnaire. In this way, method biases were controlled.

### *Confirmatory factor analysis; reliability and validity*

To investigate the psychometric properties of the measures, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using SmartPLS3. “Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ” and “composite reliability (CR)” were calculated to assess the reliability of measures as per directions provided by (Mansoor *et al.*, 2020b). Table 2 depicts the reliability of all the reflective measures on the basis of the values of Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  (above 0.70) and CR. Additionally, measures’ “convergent and discriminant validity” was assessed. As “factor loadings” of all indicator variables were  $\Rightarrow$  0.70 with significant loading of each item ( $p < 0.01$ ) onto its underlying variable and “average variance extracted” of latent variables was above 0.50 for all study constructs, therefore, “convergent validity” was established. Further, “Fornell and Larcker (1981) method” was used to establish the “discriminant validity,” and results indicated that the shared variance between various constructs was less than the average variance shared in the latent constructs with their respective indicator variable (Table 1).

Henseler *et al.* (2015) suggested that the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is a more accurate measure of discriminant validity while using smart PLS. The value of the HTMT ratio should be less than 0.9 as depicted in Table 2 that all values were less than 0.9 for the entire model.

Constructs/indicators	Factor loadings					AVE	CR	Cronbach's $\alpha$
	1	2	3	4	5			
<i>Overall public trust in local govt.</i>						0.720	0.927	0.861
OPT1	0.731							
OPT2	0.781							
OPT3	0.977							
OPT4	0.880							
OPT5	0.852							
<i>Perceived response of government to COVID-19</i>						0.758	0.961	0.882
PRGC1		0.768						
PRGC2		0.799						
PRGC3		0.781						
PRGC4		0.780						
PRGC5		0.982						
PRGC6		0.981						
PRGC7		0.980						
PRGC8		0.855						
PRGC9		0.836						
PRGC10		0.842						
PRGC11		0.865						
PRGC12		0.814						
<i>Perceived transparency</i>						0.675	0.892	0.810
PT1			0.849					
PT2			0.852					
PT3			0.852					
PT4			0.726					
<i>Perceived accountability</i>						0.748	0.922	0.823
PA1				0.910				
PA2				0.852				
PA3				0.925				
PA4				0.764				
<i>Perceived responsiveness</i>						0.659	0.906	0.815
PR1					0.878			
PR2					0.754			
PR3					0.781			
PR4					0.880			
PR5					0.757			

**Notes:** CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted

**Table 1.**  
Factor loadings,  
reliability and  
validity

**Table 2.**  
Heterotrait-Monotrait  
ratio

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
Overall public trust in local government	–				
Perceived response of government to COVID-19	0.761	–			
Perceived transparency	0.841	0.828	–		
Perceived accountability	0.834	0.731	0.721	–	
Perceived responsiveness	0.799	0.802	0.765	0.719	–



### Hypothesis testing

Bootstrapping technique was used to assess the structural paths. To test the hypotheses, 500 sub-samples were used. Hypothesized results were confirmed through  $\beta$ -coefficient,  $t$ -values and  $p$ -value. Similarly, overall model fitness or change in the model was measured by the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The results of the  $R^2$  show that there was an 85% change in overall public trust in local government because of all direct variables and mediating variables. It shows a good fit of the model.  $R^2$  for PGRC was 72%.

**Direct hypothesis.** In Table 3, the results presented show the following: perceived transparency ( $\beta = 0.131^{**}$ ,  $t = 4.864$ ), perceived accountability ( $\beta = 0.232^{***}$ ,  $t = 4.970$ ), perceived responsiveness ( $\beta = 0.218^{***}$ ,  $t = 8.354$ ) is positively and significantly related to overall public trust in local government. Likewise, results also revealed the following: perceived transparency ( $\beta = 0.647^{***}$ ,  $t = 10.329$ ), perceived accountability ( $\beta = 0.414^{***}$ ,  $t = 8.842$ ) and perceived responsiveness ( $\beta = 0.137^{**}$ ,  $t = 3.282$ ) is positively and significantly related to the perceived response of government to COVID-19. While the perceived response of the government to COVID-19 is positively and significantly related to overall public trust in local government ( $\beta = 0.726^{***}$ ,  $t = 14.614$ ). Therefore,  $H1-H3$ , which projected a positive association between perceived transparency, perceived accountability and perceived responsiveness and overall public trust in local government was fully supported. Similarly, other hypotheses i.e.  $H4-H7$  were supported (Table 3) (Figure 2).

**Mediation hypothesis.** As depicted in Table 3, the mediation hypotheses ( $H8-H10$ ) are supported. An indirect and positive association of perceived transparency was found with overall public trust in local government ( $\beta = 0.469^{***}$ ,  $t = 9.739$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). Also, an indirect and positive association of perceived accountability was found with overall public trust in local government ( $\beta = 0.301^{***}$ ,  $t = 6.997$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). Similarly, a positive and an indirect relationship of perceived responsiveness was found with overall public trust in local government ( $\beta = 0.120^{***}$ ,  $t = 3.422$ ,  $p < 0.010$ ). Further, results showed the non-zero value for the lower and upper lee confidence interval supporting the significance level of findings (Figure 3).

## Discussion, implications, limitations and future directions

### Findings

All hypotheses of the study were supported, which shows that perceived transparency, perceived accountability and perceived responsiveness are significantly and positively related to government response to COVID-19 and overall public trust in local government. Government perceived response to COVID-19 acts as an underlying mechanism between the

Hypothesis	Hypotheses	Std. beta	$t$ -value	$p$ -values	Findings
$H_1$	PT $\rightarrow$ OPT	0.131	4.864	0.010	Supported
$H_2$	PA $\rightarrow$ OPT	0.232	4.970	0.000	Supported
$H_3$	SAL $\rightarrow$ OPT	0.218	8.354	0.000	Supported
$H_4$	PT $\rightarrow$ PGRC	0.647	10.329	0.000	Supported
$H_5$	PA $\rightarrow$ PGRC	0.414	8.842	0.000	Supported
$H_6$	PR $\rightarrow$ PGRC	0.137	3.282	0.010	Supported
$H_7$	JSAT $\rightarrow$ INT	0.726	14.614	0.000	Supported
$H_8$	PT $\rightarrow$ PGRC $\rightarrow$ OPT	0.469	9.739	0.000	Supported
$H_9$	PA $\rightarrow$ PGRC $\rightarrow$ OPT	0.301	6.997	0.000	Supported
$H_{10}$	PR $\rightarrow$ PGRC $\rightarrow$ OPT	0.120	3.422	0.000	Supported

**Table 3.**  
Hypothesis testing  
results

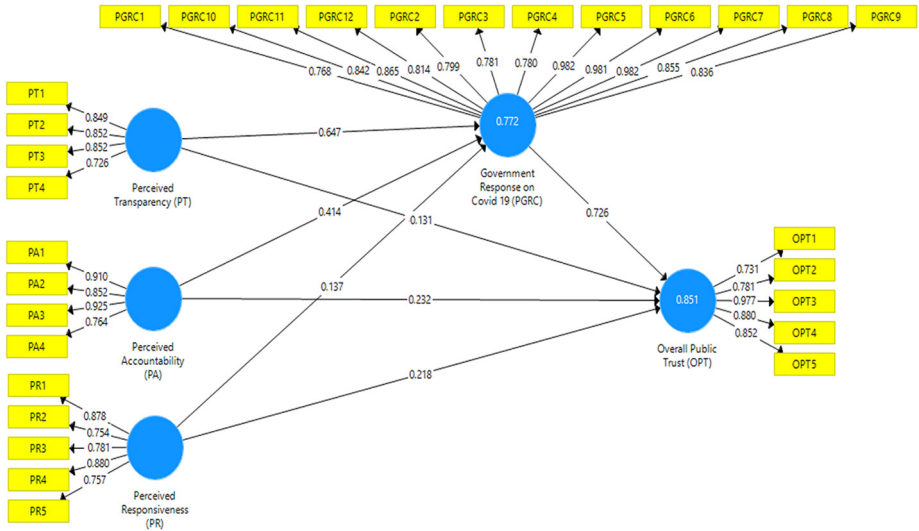


Figure 2.  
Full measurement  
model

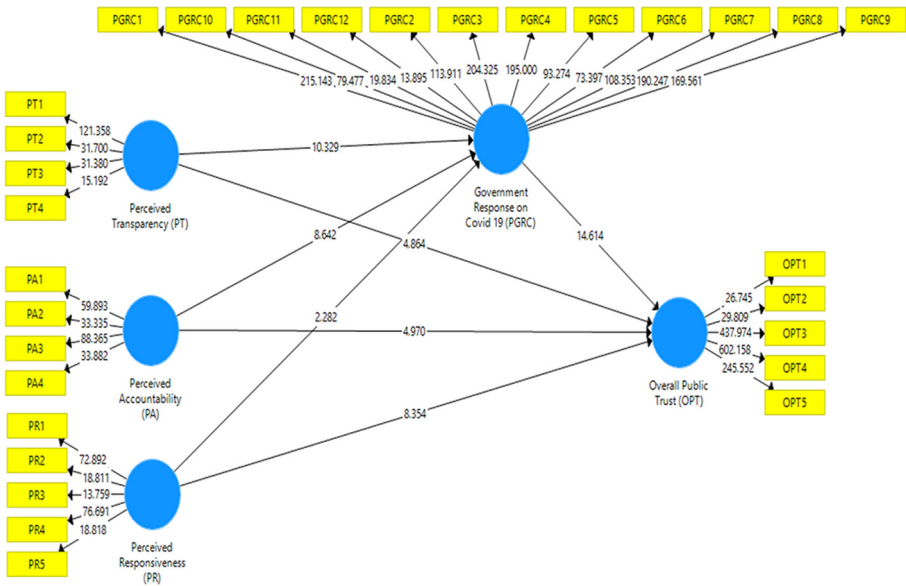


Figure 3.  
Full structural model

association of perceived transparency, perceived accountability and perceived responsiveness with overall public trust in local government. Our findings related to perceived transparency are consistent with the outcomes of (Farwell *et al.*, 2019; Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.*, 2013), which states that transparent information dispersed by the government always results in the winning of the public trust level in the government. The findings related to the association of perceived accountability with overall public trust in

local government are in line with the results of (Farwell *et al.*, 2019; Russell, 2019). Likewise, the relationship of perceived responsiveness with overall public trust in local government was found to be significant as noticed by (Beshi and Kaur, 2020; Brillantes and Fernandez, 2011; Cheema, 2011), thus signifying the importance of the responsiveness element in the government toward their citizens for achieving their higher level of trust. Similarly, the findings related to the relationship of transparency, accountability, responsiveness with overall public trust in local government were in line with Ojiagu *et al.* (2020), Shvetsova *et al.* (2020) and results depicting the association of PGRC and overall public trust in local government were similar to the results of Hale *et al.* (2020), Henderson *et al.* (2020) and Germani *et al.* (2020), which clearly show that when governments respond to natural disasters and uncertain situations timely and efficiently and deemed themselves as accountable to the general public, then automatically, the trust level of the citizens in local government increases, resulting into a sound and sustainable economic situation of the country. Finally, this study also proved the mediatory role of PGRC between the three perceived factors and perceived public trust in government.

#### *Discussion, study implications and future directions*

The current study contributes to literature related to public trust in the emergency pandemic context of Indonesia. Along with global counterparts, Indonesian Government was also responding to Covid-19 on a timely basis. The core strategy of this response was to involve and realize all stakeholders through the transparent, accountable and responsive way toward the best interest of the public in a pandemic situation. The foundation of the transparency is laid on the notion that the more the government displays information to the citizens, the more they will trust the government (Moore, 2018). It was theorized that perceived practices of transparency, responsiveness and accountability during the pandemic situation based on the response of the state to COVID-19 would positively relate to citizens' trust in local government, and the finding ultimately showed that perceived practices significantly reflected the importance of information sharing with stakeholders. So, the government officials and policymakers may get insights from these findings. Additionally, it is important for government bodies to realize the importance of managing public perceptions about government response to emergency situations. Likewise, the public deserves to be treated in an accountable, transparent and responsive way. Due to time and financial constraints the small sample size ( $N = 330$ ) may not truly represent the whole population therefore, it is recommended for the future researchers to overcome this limitation with large data set. Moreover, the limitation of cross-sectional research design can be overcome with longitudinal or time series research design in the future for better causality and predictability in future. Additionally, future research might take into consideration the risk factor associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on overall public trust. Also, the role of E-governance in the modern era of social media perception management techniques is crucial. In conclusion, to regulate its integrity and effectiveness and to sustain the public trust, it is imperative for local government to perform its job timely and effectively by appropriately administering the demands of citizens.

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