

Examining transparency of e-procurement in Czech Republic

Dieu Nguyen

PhD Students,

Faculty of Economics and Administration,

Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Abstract:

Transparency is one of the core principles of public procurement (Halonen et al., 2019) and is becoming an increasingly important academic topic, broadening both the scope and the perspectives studied. E-procurement is an essential tool that has led to more transparency than traditional procurement channels (Furnas, 2013). Many studies have shown that e-procurement has a positive impact on transparency in public procurement (Johnson, 2011; Nozadze, 2015; United Nations, 2011). When it comes to transparency, e-procurement systems are important tools to ensure that all stakeholders have open access to relevant procurement information and to make contracting authorities more accountable to citizens (Becker, 2018; OECD, 2019).

Transparency in public procurement in the Czech Republic was a driving force behind the development and introduction of the Czech e-procurement information system in 2006. Since then, numerous public contracts have been made available online via e-procurement portals. Despite efforts to promote best practises in public procurement, problems remain due to a lack of transparency, as documented by Chmelová & Štípek (2017). The Czech Republic's score on Transparency International's corruption perception index (CPI) has steadily declined from 59 in 2018 to 54 in the present (2021). This is the result of the fact that the fight against corruption in the Czech Republic has not really been carried out as promised (Transparency International CZ, 2022).

The aim of this study was to investigate the level of transparency in e-procurement in the Czech Republic. Several studies have used the Website Attribute Evaluation System (WAES) to assess e-procurement transparency in specific case studies (see la Porte et al., 2016; Porebski, 2011; Ribeiro & Vaz, 2011). Currently, there is no research on e-procurement transparency in the Czech Republic. Chvalkovská & Skuhrovec (2010) research on e-procurement information system transparency measures comes closest to addressing this issue but the actual data from the research was not published in this paper.

In this study, the technique WAES is used to analyse the level of transparency of the e-procurement system in the Czech Republic, as the transparency of the e-procurement system is of great importance for minimising corruption activities related to public procurement. The need for the government to make all relevant public procurement information publicly available is central to any assessment of the level of transparency of the e-procurement system.

To determine the transparency of the e-procurement system, a content analysis of the website is conducted. For the content analysis of this study, a checklist derived from the transparency index of the WAES method was used. This is used by the author to determine whether or not each element is present on the e-procurement portal.

This study provides up-to-date data on the transparency of Czech e-procurement websites. The study is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses how e-procurement has developed in the Czech Republic and reviews the public procurement literature relevant to this topic. The methodology of the study is described in Section 3, followed by the results of the study and discussion in Sections 4 and 5. Conclusion, limitation of the study and recommendation for future studies are included in Section 6