

The Leadership Role in The Smart-Village Program in Banyuwangi District, East Java

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Received: December 21 ,2020

Revised: May 17 ,2021

Accepted: June 30 ,2021

Available Online: August 20 ,2021

Abstract

The use of information communication technology (ICT) in government administration has changed the face of Weber's conventional bureaucracy into a modern model. The electronic or digital-based government model is an important milestone in this 21st century due to its ability to improve government performance, thereby increasing public satisfaction. The successful implementation of e-government is influenced by many beneficial and nonbeneficial determining factors, such as leadership. Therefore, this research aims to explore the leadership role of the Smart village program implemented in 2010 by the Banyuwangi District Government using a qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation in selected locations, interviews, and secondary sources. The data obtained were processed using the NVivo application process due to its ability to capture and build inductively concepts that describe research based on local perspectives. The results processed through the word cloud feature illustrate two interesting analyses. First Smart village is considered an online administration service by the Banyuwangi people because it is easy, fast, open, and full of certainty. Second leadership has 5 important roles, namely Charismatic, Innovative, Consistent, Cooperation, and Integrity. In conclusion, the success of e-government is strongly influenced by the usefulness of services for the community and the seriousness of the leadership to implement e-government not only as a political gimmick but to serve the community.

Keywords: Digital service, Transformational Leadership, Digital Society, Openness

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33701/jtp.v13i1.1429>

Abstrak

Penggunaan teknologi, informasi dan komunikasi (TIK) dalam penyelenggaraan pemerintahan yang mengubah wajah birokrasi konvensional model Weber menjadi model pemerintahan modern. Electronic government menjadi tonggak penting dalam penyelenggaraan pemerintahan abad 21, disebutkan sebagai model pemerintahan berbasis digital yang mampu meningkatkan kinerja pemerintahan sekaligus meningkatkan kepuasan masyarakat. Kesuksesan penerapan E-government dipengaruhi oleh multi factor dan tidak semua mampu mencapai potensi benefits yang dijanjikan. Kepemimpinan adalah salah satu faktor determinan yang menjamin ketercapaian tujuan e-government. Paper ini berupaya untuk menggali peran kepemimpinan untuk program Smart-Kampung yang diterapkan secara konsisten sejak 2010 oleh Pemerintah Kabupaten Banyuwangi dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Data penelitian menggunakan data primer diperoleh melalui observasi di beberapa lokasi terpilih, wawancara dan data sekunder. Pengolahan data menggunakan aplikasi NVivo dengan alasan dapat menangkap dan membangun secara induktif konsep yang menggambarkan penelitian berdasarkan perspektif lokal. Hasil penelitian melalui fitur word cloud menggambarkan dua hasil yang menarik. Smart-Kampung dipandang oleh warga desa Banyuwangi sebagai pelayanan administrasi online yang memudahkan, cepat, terbuka dan penuh kepastian. Hasil kedua menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan memiliki lima peran penting, yaitu: Kharismatik, Inovatif, Konsisten, Kerjasama dan Integritas. Kesuksesan e-government sangat dipengaruhi oleh kebermanfaatan pelayanan untuk masyarakat serta kesungguhan pimpinan untuk menerapkan e-government dengan sungguh-sungguh dan tidak hanya dijadikan sebagai gimik politik.

Kata kunci: Pelayanan digital, Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Masyarakat Digital, Keterbukaan

INTRODUCTION

".....leadership is the process of improving the government bureaucracy to enhance accountability and transparency" (Ahn & Bretschneider, 2011). One of the important factors used to improve public services in Information and communication technology (ICT). This process has succeeded in changing traditional public services into modern services, thereby eliminating the phenomenon of red tape bureaucracy and corruption (Welch et al., 2005). ICT innovations make services run better and

easily accessible by providing accurate and fast information to the public through internet-based digital platforms (Shouran et al., 2019). There are numerous advantages associated with the use of ICT in government administration, such as lower cost, increase in efficiency, enhanced government services to the community and the business sector, increase in the quality and capacity of government organizations, as well as expanding networks and communication with all stakeholders (S. A. Nawafleh, R. F. Obiedat, 2012).

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According to Luk (2009), public organizations are often criticized for being rigid, procedural, and inefficient, unable to provide good services to the community. Therefore, in responding to these criticisms, many government organizations made various breakthroughs to enhance their services to the community. Inventions and developments in information technology, such as the design of microcomputers and various mainframes, were then applied in government administration and used as a tool to boost the performance of public organizations. ICT in governance has been able to change the face of government organizations for the better by enabling them to reach a wider audience within a limited time. Furthermore, the government's performance is much better when using digital concepts, such as ICT applications. The concept of e-government is an essential milestone in implementing digital-based government, which is significantly used in developed countries. The success of this method of administration is largely determined by the decentralization of responsibilities and processes using ICT innovations. E-Government opens the widest access for citizens to make direct contact with the government through various digital platforms. Citizens have the right to acquire any information from state officials and official websites on the processes and results of legislative organizations (Basu, 2011). E-government gives citizens massive rights to determine the strategies used by public administration organizations to carry out the mandate of

citizens. It also requires state officials to provide the widest possible information for citizens to understand their daily activities. Technology makes it easy for developed countries to create systems that allow queue-free open access 24 hours per day due to their excellent quality human resources, budgetary strength, IT infrastructure, and community readiness. This is opposed to developing countries which tend to have numerous challenges and obstacles associated with the implementation of e-government. According to S. A. Nawafleh and R. F. Obiedat (2012), some of the challenges to implementing e-government in developing countries include the adherence of conventional culture and political factors due to socio-cultural, economic, and public organizational culture. Radical changes by incorporating new innovations into the status quo lead to considerable political turmoil in developing countries, unlike developed ones.

Leadership is one of the important factors for the success of e-government in developing countries. According to Aycan (2002), some of the challenges of developing countries in technology are physical development, poor quality of human resources, infrastructure, weak economy, unstable politics, limited public access to education, health, large population, young workforce, and gender barrier. Furthermore, developing countries are shaped by the pattern of life they go through, with the majority influenced by colonialism, an authoritarian government system, and dependent on the agricultural sector,

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33701/jtp.v13i1.1429>

thereby increasing their poverty levels. In terms of geographical conditions and organizational culture, people in developing countries are independent, have strong kinship relations, and are characterized by collectivism and networks. People in developing countries are also patriarchs and hold a strong subordinate-superior/patron-client culture. Communities in developing countries need role models capable of becoming their cogs of life. Therefore, the role of leadership is very prominent and necessary for this category of people because it also acts as a locomotive for the bureaucracy, society, and other groups of people.

According to Kifle & Cheng Patrick Low (2009), Luk (2009) and Khasawneh (2010), the success and failure of e-government implementation are strongly influenced by various leadership factors. Research carried out in Sragen District in Indonesia as a pioneer of e-government shows that leadership factors influenced the success (Bjorn Furuholt & Fathul, 2008). The research carried out by Luk (2009) also showed how the role of leadership significantly influences the success of implementing e-stamp in Hong Kong, a developed region.

The implementation of E-Government in Indonesia officially started in 2013 through Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2003. Public organizations then followed up this policy at the national level with early indicators of the proliferation of official websites. However, the increase in the number of websites was not in accordance

with the rise in quality (Rahardjo, Mirchandania, and Joshia, 2007; Prahono and Elidjen, 2015). Overall, Indonesia's national e-government achievement at the global level is still low (Rokhman, 2013). According to a 2018 research from 543 websites, 83 (15.3%), 341 (62.8%), 115 (21.2%) and 4 (0.7%) local government, are still in the preparation, maturation, consolidation and utilization stages, respectively (Yunita & Aprianto, 2018). This finding shows that the implementation of e-government in Indonesia is only at an early or web presence stage, despite claims by government agencies of its usage (Sosiawan, 2017). According to Napitupulu (2017), most local governments have partially implemented e-government focusing on technology issues and not on non-technical variables that greatly affect its success. The disparity in the implementation of E-Government in Indonesia is very high (Bjørn Furuholt & Wahid, 2008).

Conversely, several local governments have shown high commitment and succeeded in using e-government as a medium to carry out various reforms. An example is the Smart-Village with Banyuwangi District, one of the few local governments that consistently implement this strategy. The Banyuwangi District Government has consistently and gradually developed a smart village since 2010 (Baru et al., 2019). Several studies have shown its success as an online-based administrative service model that is accessible and intended for rural communities (Aziiza & Susanto, 2020; Sekarsari & Winarno, 2018).

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Smart Village has succeeded in making the service process faster, easier and cheaper (Setiawan P et al., 2016). According to Setiawan (2016), Smart Village has the ability to improve the performance of the Village Government better, become more transparent and accountable (Kurniawati & Pangayouw, 2017). Furthermore, it has received awards from the central government and other organizations as a successful digital public service. Banyuwangi is one of the areas with prominent branding and the most innovative district in Indonesia. The success of E-Government and the leadership concept has been widely studied. Therefore, this study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of leadership in supporting the successful implementation of e-government. It also aims to identify the role of leadership for the Smart Village case in the Banyuwangi District. This research attempts to answer the following questions, 1) What is the opinion of the village community on Smart Village, and 2) What is the role of leadership in Smart Village.

This research differs from previous studies due to the use of the CAQDAS application for data analysis. It also research aims to determine leadership indicators that are produced by other studies.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach to acquire an overview of Smart Village and the role of leadership based on the Banyuwangi community's perspective. Data were collected from several locations,

such as public service malls, through observation and interviews. Furthermore, the purposive and accidental sampling methods were used to obtain secondary data from the Banyuwangi District Government official government documents. Data analysis using QSR NVivo 12 software was used to inductively obtain and build research results based on local perspectives and field data. Computer-based qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is helpful for the accurate and transparent analysis of field data (Welsh, 2002).

NVivo performs the data analysis process more carefully than the manual process with more guaranteed validity and reliability (Neill, 2013). The steps include: 1) Collecting data according to the research focus, 2) Entering data into NVivo for it to be stored in a more organized manner and divided into several folders tailored to research needs. It also consists of two research folders, namely smart village and leadership roles. 3) Each folder contains primary and secondary data according to its category. 4) Read data are entered sequentially for coding into nodes and cases, both of which are associated as containers containing various data with similar groups. A node consists of parents and children. 5) Perform coding/classification of data according to the characteristics. 6) Visualization with a word cloud to determine the most frequent word for smart village programs and leadership roles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Perspective on Smart Village

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Banyuwangi District is the farthest and widest district in East Java, with an area of 5,782.50 km² and consisting of a total of 189 villages. The distance from the farthest village to the district office takes approximately 3 hours (Baru et al., 2019). The landscape of this district covers the lowlands to the highlands, with a third of the area being a national park. Since the reign of Regent Ani Ratnawati, the Banyuwangi Regency Government has opened access to all villages with good road infrastructure. However, due to the size of the area, it takes 3 hours to reach the farthest village takes from the administrative service center in the district capital. This is, therefore, an obstacle and reduces village community access to obtain administrative services easily.

Smart Village is an online-based administrative service program originally designed to make it easier for rural communities to get services without wasting time and money (Setiawan P et al., 2016). Subsequent developments showed that this policy was later transformed into an instrument of village empowerment in the Banyuwangi District due to its ability to improve the economy of rural communities (Sekarsari & Winarno, 2018). According to Baru et al. (2019), the Smart Village program started with the gradual planting of fiber optics in all villages. The district government then increased the function of the village hall as a service center for development. The Village Government also has the authority to develop Smart Village according to their needs (Aziiza & Susanto, 2020).

The primary and secondary data collected were analyzed with the Word cloud feature on NVivo to determine the benefits of this policy for rural communities in Banyuwangi. Figure 1 shows the results of the Word Cloud Smart Village.

Figure 1

Word Cloud Smart Village



According to the local community, the word frequency emerges from the analysis provided some important concepts on Smart Village. This policy is based on online services, transparent/Open, easy, and an interesting phenomenon to discuss. It is also based on the population of Banyuwangi, which is socio-culturally included in a traditional agrarian society, with an education index of 0.60 in 2019 and socio-economic conditions that show a positive trend from 2010 to 2019. The creative economy with Smart Village drives Banyuwangi economic growth as the driving force.

These results illustrate that Smart Village has been firmly embedded and fully

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understood by the Banyuwangi community as an online-based administrative service. Users stated that this policy makes it easier for them to acquire the right services. Client/user acceptance of an innovation that uses technology for the community is important for program sustainability. An instance is the ICT-based service innovations, enabling the government to provide time-saving, effective, and inexpensive services with efficient applications. Applications need to be culturally sensitive to establish a good relationship between the government as a service provider and the community as recipients (Evans & Yen, 2006). According to Bertot et al. (2010), the use of ICT in Smart Village conceptually illustrates that the system has the ability to provide services that are more open and transparent, thereby preventing corruption.

Initially, the use of ICT was partially used for public services to provide convenience, increasing speed, bringing it closer to the community, eliminating discrimination, systematizing procedures to be more certain, providing precise, accurate services, and eliminating the phenomenon of red tape or petty bribery usually found in bureaucrats that provide direct services to the public. According to Transparency International (2009), petty corruption is "the abuse of power by lower-middle-level government officials against the general

public in need of services." The money demanded from this phenomenon is very small when calculated per individual. Therefore, it becomes a very large social and financial loss when several people are affected by this phenomenon. Bureaucrats in direct contact with the community are a vulnerable group to cases of bribes and petty gratuities (Lipsky, 2010). This phenomenon occurs in Indonesia and other many developing countries. Surveys show that 65% of Vietnamese residents make facilitation payments to obtain public services from the government (Chêne, 2019)¹.

The IT-based government model is able to break down barriers to bureaucratic services characterized by complicated, slow, closed, discriminatory, and corruption (Lipsky, 2010). E-Government is the answer that brings significant changes to public services (Camillo, 2017). This is because it has the potential to strengthen the hypothesis that 'electronic doors' have the ability to provide much better services than 'wooden doors.' Smart Village is proven to provide services that are different from the conventional, which is time-consuming, costly, and have the opportunity for petty corruption, which usually occurs in lower-level bureaucratic services. *Citizens and the private sector face petty corruption daily in terms of receiving basic services such as connections to utilities, passports,*

¹ Transparency International, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/kproducts/Fighting-petty-corruption-2019.pdf>

admissions to the school, and dealing with trade-related customs' formalities (Carr & Jago, 2014). Conventional services require face-to-face interaction between bureaucrats and the public. It comprises queues, the process of checking the required documents, procedure needed to open up opportunities for the phenomenon of petty corruption, and services needed in 'facilitating money for the community. Fazekas (2017) stated that complicated and unclear procedures that go through several tables are also the driving forces behind the occurrence of petty corruption symptoms. The application of ICT in public services is an innovation used to eliminate this phenomenon by simplifying the process, eliminating piles of documents, queues, and contact between bureaucrats and the public. Therefore, opportunities to suppress bribery and corruption are the main goals to be achieved. The use of ICT applications in public services eradicates corruption (Sheryazdanova & Butterfield, 2017; Elbahnasawy, 2014; Kim et al., 2009; Ostermann & Staudinger, 2011; Zhao & Xu, 2015). Smart Village has transformed conventional services into digital that eliminate direct interactions, queues, and table transfer procedures. From the user's perspective, an open service needs to facilitate and provide certainty. Smart Village is a service that provides information on all requirements and procedures needed by users without exception. This policy clearly provides certainty regarding the service requirements and procedures needed. Therefore, when the documents are

complete, then the service process runs, and vice versa. Furthermore, it creates equal services for everyone because it is an anti-discrimination application. The Banyuwangi District Government has a strong commitment to providing the best service for its people. Good governance is characterized by public services that run based on equal rights, and all citizens need to be treated equally. According to Grohs et al. (2016), the *equal treatment of all citizens is one of the fundamental principles of good administrative practice*.

B. Leadership role in Smart Village

Leadership has been mentioned in several studies as playing an important role in implementing and maintaining the sustainability of E-Government. This research aims to provide an in-depth analysis into the strategies needed to implement leadership roles for the proper maintenance and development of Smart Village in Banyuwangi. The results of the analysis show that there are 5 important leadership concepts for Smart Village in Banyuwangi, namely Charismatic, Innovative, Consistent, Cooperation, and Integrity, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Word cloud Leadership Role

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Leadership is closely related to the ability to achieve the mission and goals of an organization. The performance of organizations' leaders is measured by their ability to provide services that meet users' needs. Leaders are considered to have the ability to achieve organizational goals related to their attributes, authority, responsibilities, and budget. The success of a leader is not only determined by the power of giving orders. Rather, it is measured by the various innovations and ability to change direction initiative into execution. Leaders play a central role in implementing Smart Village in Banyuwangi District, as stated in the research carried out by Bjørn Furuholt & Wahid (2008) in Indonesia and other countries. Leadership is central to implementing and ensuring the sustainability of e-government implementation in developing countries, such as the cases in Brunei Darussalam (Kifle & Cheng Patrick Low, 2009) and Yordania (Khasawneh, 2010). The concept of leadership used in this research refers to the notion according to Tozer (2012). According to Lee & Liu (2011), *leadership is the ability* and willingness to bring people together to achieve a common goal

voluntarily. *This activity needs to be carried out by someone with good leadership qualities.*

The Smart Village Policy in Banyuwangi Regency shows that the transformation process of governance is strongly influenced by leadership. It is also identical to the leadership of the Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas, which is very prominent. The search engine shows that when typing the phrase "Smart Village," another phrase appears the same as Regent Azwar Anas. The frequency of words between the words "smart village" is similar to the Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas. This finding proves that the Smart Village policy was initiated and born from the idea of Regent Anas and was consistently maintained throughout the first and second reign in Banyuwangi District. The consistency of regional heads to continue this policy has yielded significant results, and the policy received appreciation from various parties.

The political power of the leader obtained legitimacy through direct elections provides great authority that is able to determine the success and failure of implementing e-government policies (Luk, 2009). Furthermore, the leadership factor due to political constellation is a factor capable of affecting the success of e-government implementation in a country such as South Korea (Ahn & Bretschneider, 2011). Research carried out by Zhang et al. (2008) stated that leadership and the quality of the system used affect e-government policy. The research conducted in Jordan

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33701/jtp.v13i1.1429>

reported in detail the role of leadership in each phase of e-government policy implementation in developing countries (Khasawneh, 2010). Novita (2014) stated that the implementation of e-government in the city of Palembang influenced the success of policy implementation. Therefore, the role of leaders who consistently fight for e-government is to give direction on application development by supporting the implementation of providing human, financial and technical resources. Leadership plays a positive impact in directing, providing advanced knowledge sharing, and transferring and mobilizing resources (Prybutok et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2008).

The result of the word cloud showed that the success of Smart Village is determined by leadership with the characteristics of being innovative, charismatic, and consistent in working together. The concept of honesty appears as a concept that accompanies the concept of integrity. Charismatic and innovative concepts are leadership traits that include transformational styles. Trapero & De Lozada (2010) stated that integrity is one of the transformational leadership characteristics due to its consistency between words and deeds. The concept of integrity in this research is consistent, which was also adopted as a data analysis result. Meanwhile, the concept of cooperation emerged as one of the characteristics of leadership in Smart Village. Cooperation can be interpreted as the ability to create a conducive atmosphere for all actors involved to be able to achieve common goals. It also

provides psychological comfort that involves all actors' participation (Li et al., 2018).

According to Burns, transformational leadership is applied when the leader inspires, motivates and directs followers in the right direction. Transformational leadership has the personal power to get followers to achieve a shared vision. It enables leaders to transfer their expectations, perceptions, and motivations to followers to work together towards a common goal. Burns further stated that transformational leaders are able to persuade their followers to move up the Maslow hierarchy and assist them in achieving their individual goals. In contrast to the transactional approach, this approach is not based on a "give and take" relationship, rather it sets an example with personally embedded behaviors and identities. Stewart (2006) defined it as the leadership that emphasizes the leader's personal characteristics, traits, and abilities to make change the articulation of an energizing vision to achieve challenging goals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the success and sustainability of Smart Village in Banyuwangi District are influenced by the level of community acceptance as users and leaders. The concept of online-based public services is fully understood and implemented by the community. Meanwhile, leadership plays an important role in ensuring continuity and success by taking several actions such as charisma, integrity, innovation, consistency,

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and working together. The Banyuwangi District Government, through its political figures, is serious about implementing the program in full. Smart Village is guarded seriously to achieve the desired goal, therefore, based on the leadership characteristics displayed, there is a tendency to achieve a transformational leadership style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are grateful to the Chancellor and Head of the Institute for Research & Strategic Studies of the Institute of Governance of Home Affairs (IPDN) for financially supporting this research and assisting in carrying out the screening and review process.

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