

Digital Transformation in the Bureaucracy of Kuningan Regency: Achieving Efficient and Transparent Public Services

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Abstract

This study examines the role of digital transformation in enhancing bureaucratic efficiency and transparency in Kuningan Regency. As public expectations for faster, more transparent services grow, the local government is adopting various digital technologies, including e- government platforms, to improve service delivery. Using a case study methodology, this research assesses the implementation of digital tools in streamlining administrative processes and fostering better public access to government information. The findings indicate that while digital transformation has significantly increased operational efficiency, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, infrastructural constraints, and resistance to technological change continue to hinder full adoption. The study concludes by recommending targeted policy interventions to overcome these obstacles, ensuring that digital governance not only increases service efficiency but also strengthens accountability and trust in the public administration of Kuningan. This paper contributes to the understanding of how local governments in developing regions can effectively implement digital reforms to modernize bureaucracy and meet the demands of a digital age.

Keywords:

bureaucratic reform; digital governance; digital tools; public accountability; service efficiency

Introduction

Digital transformation in the public sector has become an essential focus in modern governance, driven by the need to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of bureaucratic processes. Governments worldwide are increasingly leveraging digital tools to streamline services, improve decision-making, and meet growing public expectations for timely and transparent service delivery. In developing regions, such as Kuningan Regency, these transformations are crucial to overcoming traditional inefficiencies in public administration and achieving sustainable governance.

The adoption of digital technologies in local government, often referred to as e government, aims to modernize bureaucratic operations by reducing manual processes, automating workflows, and enabling greater access to public services. Numerous studies have highlighted the positive impact of digitalization on reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks,

improving transparency, and enhancing accountability in public administration (Mergel et al., 2019; Meijer, 2021). However, despite its potential, digital transformation also presents challenges, particularly in regions with limited infrastructure, digital literacy gaps, and resistance to organizational change (Kotter, 1996).

This paper seeks to examine the role of digital transformation in the bureaucracy of Kuningan Regency and its effectiveness in achieving efficient and transparent public services. The central research question is: How does digital transformation impact bureaucratic efficiency and transparency in Kuningan Regency? The study also investigates the challenges encountered during the implementation of digital tools and proposes solutions for enhancing digital governance in the region.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the impact of digital transformation on bureaucratic efficiency and transparency in Kuningan Regency. The research focuses on identifying how digital tools and e-government platforms have been integrated into local government processes and their effectiveness in improving public services. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with key government officials, local policymakers, and IT experts involved in implementing digital initiatives in the region. Additionally, this research analyzed relevant documents such as policy reports, official government publications, and digital infrastructure assessments.

For data analysis, thematic analysis was utilized to identify key themes related to digital transformation, challenges, and outcomes in the bureaucratic setting. This method allowed for the organization of qualitative data into patterns that reflect the overall impact of digitalization on bureaucratic practices. Furthermore, the study applied comparative analysis by referencing successful digital governance models from other regions, identifying areas of improvement and adaptation specific to the context of Kuningan Regency.

The validity and reliability of the data were ensured through triangulation, by comparing findings from interviews, document analysis, and field observations. This approach helped verify the consistency and accuracy of the conclusions drawn, offering a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of digital transformation in the local government bureaucracy of Kuningan.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the study on digital transformation in Kuningan Regency's bureaucracy, specifically regarding the impact on public service efficiency and transparency. It also engages with the relevant theoretical frameworks and integrates supporting data. The data collected through interviews, document analysis, and field observations reveal significant changes in the local government's bureaucratic processes after implementing digital tools. The primary platforms used include e-government systems for public service management and decision-making tools based on data analytics.

1. Increased Efficiency

The introduction of digital platforms has led to considerable improvements in administrative efficiency. For example, public services like permit applications, civil registrations, and tax payments, previously reliant on manual processes, are now accessible online. This has reduced the time required for processing from weeks to days or even hours. Table 1 shows a comparison of service times for various administrative tasks before and after the digital transformation:

Table 1.

Comparison of service times for various administrative tasks

Service Type	Pre-Digitalization (Days)	Post-Digitalization (Hours)
Business Permit Issuance	7	24
Civil Registration	14	48
Tax Payments	3	12

Source: processed by author, 2024

2. Enhanced Transparency

Digital transformation has also enhanced transparency in the bureaucratic process. The availability of real-time data on public service delivery allows both the government and citizens to track the progress of service requests. This transparency has increased public trust, as citizens can now access service data directly through government portals.

2.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study align with Mergel et al.'s (2019) Digital Government Transformation Theory, which emphasizes the potential of digital tools to enhance public service delivery by automating bureaucratic processes and making information more accessible. In Kuningan, the shift from manual to digital operations supports Mergel's argument that digitalization can streamline service delivery, reducing time and operational inefficiencies. Further, the theory of Public Accountability (Bovens, 2007) is reflected in the increased

transparency brought about by digital systems. With access to real-time data and clear communication between the government and citizens, accountability has improved as public officials are held to higher standards of responsiveness and accuracy.

2.2 Challenges and Limitations

However, challenges remain, particularly related to digital literacy and infrastructure limitations. As shown in Table 2, over 30% of the interviewed citizens reported difficulties in navigating online services due to lack of digital literacy. Moreover, infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, remains a significant barrier to full implementation of digital tools.

Table 2.

Interview results from residents	
Challenge	Percentage of Respondents
Digital Literacy Issues	30%
Infrastructure Constraints	45%

Source: processed by author, 2024

These findings align with Kotter's (1996) Change Management Theory, which suggests that technological transformations require not only technical solutions but also organizational and cultural readiness. The digital resistance encountered in Kuningan highlights the need for more comprehensive training programs and infrastructure development to maximize the benefits of digital transformation. The digital transformation in Kuningan's bureaucracy has contributed to significant improvements in service efficiency and transparency, though challenges related to digital literacy and infrastructure still require attention. Moving forward, the government must focus on bridging these gaps to ensure the success of its digital initiatives.

Conclusion

This study highlights the positive impact of digital transformation on the bureaucracy of Kuningan Regency, specifically in enhancing service efficiency and transparency. The implementation of digital tools, such as e-government platforms, has significantly streamlined administrative processes, reduced service times, and increased public access to government services. Moreover, transparency has improved, fostering greater accountability within the public administration. However, challenges persist, particularly in terms of digital literacy and infrastructure limitations, which hinder the full realization of the benefits of digital transformation.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that the local government invest in comprehensive digital literacy programs for both citizens and public servants, alongside efforts to improve digital infrastructure, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, ongoing monitoring

and evaluation of digital initiatives are essential to ensure that these systems continue to meet the evolving needs of the public. By addressing these obstacles, Kuningan Regency can fully leverage digital transformation to create a more efficient, transparent, and accountable bureaucracy.

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