DIGITALISATION CATALYST: THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation in the public service sector is a strategic step in increasing efficiency, transparency, and accountability of the bureaucracy. Organizational culture plays an important role in supporting the implementation of technology through strengthening values such as integrity, professionalism, and commitment. This study aims to analyze the role of organizational culture in driving the success of digital-based public service transformation, especially through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System in Gorontalo Province. With a qualitative approach and case study method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The results of the study indicate that the integrity of regional apparatus needs to be improved through stricter supervision and structured training. Professionalism still faces challenges in the form of a lack of technical competence and capacity development. The commitment of regional apparatus to digital transformation also needs to be strengthened through a collaborative and innovative work culture. This study concludes that the synergy between integrity, professionalism, and commitment is key to creating an organizational culture that supports sustainable digital transformation. Strategic recommendations include increasing digital-based training, strengthening monitoring mechanisms, and integrating organizational cultural values into policies to achieve more effective and responsive public services.

Keywords: digital transformation, organizational culture, public service, SPBE, Gorontalo Province.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has brought the world into a dynamic digital era, where innovation is a key factor in various sectors, including the public sector. Digital transformation has become one of the global priorities to create more effective, transparent, and responsive governance to the needs of the community. In Indonesia, this digital transformation agenda is realized through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE), which aims to improve the quality of public services while optimizing bureaucratic efficiency.

SPBE is not just an effort to digitize administrative processes, but a strategic approach that involves integrating technology with profound changes in organizational structure, mindset, and work behavior. With the implementation of SPBE, the government is expected to be able to provide faster, more accessible, and more efficient services, thus creating a

positive experience for the community as service users. However, behind this great ambition, there are significant challenges, especially in terms of technological infrastructure readiness, human resource capacity, and organizational culture (Syahrani & Hernawaty, 2022).

Organizational culture, as a collection of values, norms, and work practices adopted by members of the organization, has a very important role in determining the success of digital transformation in the public sector (Abdussamad & Amala, 2016). On the one hand, an adaptive and innovative organizational culture can accelerate the digitalization process by encouraging collaboration, learning, and acceptance of change. On the other hand, a culture that tends to be resistant to innovation can be a major obstacle in the implementation of SPBE. Therefore, identifying and strengthening elements of organizational culture that support digital transformation is a strategic step that cannot be ignored(Syafikruzi, 2022).

The implementation of SPBE in Indonesia has a strong legal basis, one of which is through Presidential Regulation Number 95 of 2018 concerning the Electronic-Based Government System. This policy emphasizes the importance of technology integration in public services to improve government efficiency and accountability. However, as in many developing countries, the implementation of this policy at the regional level still faces various obstacles, including the digital divide, limited human resources, and resistance to changes in work culture. Gorontalo Province, as one of the regions that is currently intensively implementing SPBE, presents an interesting case study regarding how organizational culture can influence the success of digital transformation(Cahyarini, 2021).

In Gorontalo Province, the local government has shown its commitment to adopting SPBE through various initiatives, such as the development of an integrated information system and the digitalization of the licensing process. However, this implementation is still far from perfect. One of the biggest challenges is how to change the work culture of regional apparatus to better support innovation and collaboration. For example, resistance to the use of new technology is still often found, especially among employees who are accustomed to conventional work methods. This shows that digital transformation requires not only advanced technology, but also a profound paradigm shift within the organization.

In the context of digital transformation, three main elements of organizational culture integrity, professionalism, and commitment have a very significant role. Integrity, which includes the values of honesty, transparency, and accountability, is an important foundation for building public trust in digital systems. This trust is very crucial considering that digital-based services often involve people's personal data that must be properly protected. Unfortunately, in many regions, there are still cases where the integrity of regional apparatus is inadequate, such as corrupt practices that can damage public trust in the technology adopted (Akbar et al., 2021).

Digitalization catalysts are important factors that drive the acceleration and success of the transformation process towards the digital era in various sectors, both in organizations,

institutions, and society. In this context, digitalization catalysts are not only limited to the technology used, but also include various non-technical elements that influence the smoothness and effectiveness of the digitalization process. Factors such as visionary leadership, an organizational culture that supports innovation, human resource competence in the digital field, adequate technological infrastructure, and adaptive regulations and policies are key elements that function as catalysts. Without the right catalyst, digital transformation risks being slow, hampered by resistance, or even failing to achieve the expected goals(Abdussamad, 2021). One of the main catalysts in digitalization is visionary leadership. Leaders who have clear vision of the future of the organization in the digital era is able to drive change with a focused strategy and strong commitment. This kind of leadership is important to inspire members of the organization to be able to adapt to change and overcome the various challenges that arise during the digitalization process. In addition, organizational culture also plays a central role in accelerating digital transformation(Marwiyah et al., 2023). A culture that supports innovation, collaboration, and flexibility allows organizations to more easily accept change and implement digital technology in their operations.

Human resource competence is also an important factor in the digitalization process. Employees who have knowledge and skills in digital technology are able to operate new systems more effectively, thereby accelerating implementation and providing optimal results(Maulana & Dečman, 2023). However, this competence must be supported by reliable technology infrastructure. Without adequate infrastructure, such as a stable internet network, appropriate hardware, and a strong cybersecurity system, the digitalization process will find it difficult to achieve maximum results. investment in infrastructure development is one of the strategic steps in supporting digital transformation. In addition, supporting regulations and policies also function as catalysts for digitalization (Erniyanti, 2023). Flexible, adaptive, and pro-innovation policies can encourage the implementation of digital technology without stifling creativity or limiting the organization's room for movement (Tahir et al., 2020). On the other hand, regulations that are too strict or irrelevant to technological developments can actually hinder digital transformation. Therefore, synergy between supportive policies and technology implementation is very important in the digitalization process. In the context of public services, digitalization catalysts aim to create services that are faster, more integrated, more transparent, and more responsive to the needs of the community that continue to grow(Putri & Fauzi, 2021). For example, in Indonesia, the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) is one of the strategic steps to strengthen public services through the use of digital technology. However, the success of SPBE is not only determined by the sophistication of the technology used, but also by the readiness of human resources, organizational culture, and existing policy support. An organizational culture based on integrity, professionalism, and commitment is one of the main catalysts in driving the

success of bureaucratic digitalization (Sawir, 2020). By integrating various elements of these catalysts, digitalization can be an effective transformation tool to improve efficiency, transparency, and quality of service in various sectors. Therefore, organizations need to understand the importance of digitalization catalysts as the main foundation for realizing sustainable change that is relevant to the demands of the times. In addition to internal challenges, external factors such as support for technological infrastructure and regulations also play an important role in the success of SPBE (Akny, 2014). However, in the end, the success of digital transformation is highly dependent on the readiness of the organizational culture. Without an adaptive work culture, digitalization efforts risk becoming just a "technology project" without a significant impact on public services(Irawan & Malik, 2024). Therefore, understanding the relationship between organizational culture and digital transformation is a very relevant issue to study, especially in the context of a region such as Gorontalo.

This study aims to analyze the role of organizational culture in supporting the implementation of SPBE in Gorontalo Province, focusing on three main elements: integrity, professionalism, and commitment of regional apparatus. A qualitative approach with a case study method is used to explore the dynamics of organizational culture and the factors that influence its success in supporting digital transformation. This study not only aims to provide an overview of the current conditions, but also offers strategic recommendations to overcome the various challenges faced.

The results of this study are expected to provide real contributions to the development of policies and programs that support SPBE at the regional level. By strengthening organizational culture, Gorontalo Province has the potential to become a pioneer in digital transformation in Indonesia. In addition, this study is also expected to provide new insights for other regional governments about the importance of organizational culture in supporting sustainable digital transformation.

Digital transformation is not just a step to follow technology trends, but a strategic effort to create a government that is more inclusive, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of the community. Therefore, the success of the implementation of SPBE is highly dependent on the extent to which the government is able to build synergy between technology, policies, and organizational culture.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the role of organizational culture in supporting the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) in Gorontalo Province. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides space to explore in-depth information related to organizational values, norms, and behavior in the digital transformation process. The case study method is used because this

study focuses on a specific context, namely the implementation of SPBE in a particular region, thus allowing a comprehensive exploration of the phenomena that occur.

The location of this research is Gorontalo Province, with a focus on regional apparatuses directly involved in the implementation of SPBE. The subjects of the study included local government employees, both from the leadership level and operational staff, who have an important role in the process of digitizing public services. The selection of informants was carried out by purposive sampling, namely selecting individuals who are relevant and have direct knowledge of the research topic. The main informants in this study consisted of structural officials, technical employees, and the community as users of public services.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore the views, experiences, and perceptions of informants regarding organizational culture and the implementation of SPBE. Questions were designed to explore aspects of organizational culture, such as integrity, professionalism, and commitment, and their relationship to the success of digital transformation. In addition, direct observations were conducted in the work environment of regional apparatuses to observe work practices, interactions between employees, and the use of technology in public services. These observations aimed to identify behavioral patterns and dynamics of organizational culture that might not have been revealed in interviews. Documentation studies complemented the research data through analysis of official documents, such as SPBE policies, regional apparatus performance reports, and technical guidelines for digitalization implementation. Data from these documents helped provide an overview of the formal framework that supports digital transformation. The data analysis process was carried out using the thematic analysis method. The first stage was the collection and organization of data from interviews, observations, and documents, which were then transcribed to facilitate analysis. Furthermore, the data was coded based on main themes, such as integrity, professionalism, resistance to change, and innovation in the organization. This process also included identifying new themes that emerged during the study. After that, the patterns and relationships between elements of organizational culture and the success of SPBE implementation were analyzed, focusing on how organizational culture influences the digital transformation process, both positively and negatively. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various sources. This step was followed by member checking, which asked informants to review the interview results to ensure that the interpretation of the data was in accordance with their intentions. This study also faced several limitations, including focusing only on Gorontalo Province, so the results may not be fully generalizable to other regions. Time constraints and informant accessibility were also challenges, although mitigating steps, such as expanding the variety of informants and using various data collection techniques, were taken to overcome these constraints. With

a systematic approach, this study is expected to provide a deep understanding of the role of organizational culture in supporting the digital transformation of public services.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals the strategic role of organizational culture in supporting the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (EBS) in Gorontalo Province. Digital transformation in the public sector is an important step in creating a more transparent, efficient, and accountable government. However, the success of EBS implementation is not only determined by the technology applied, but also by the readiness of the organizational culture in accommodating this major change. A strong organizational culture can be a catalyst to accelerate adaptation to digitalization, while a weak culture can actually be a serious obstacle.

This study explores three main dimensions of organizational culture that influence the implementation of EBS, namely integrity, professionalism, and commitment. In addition, this study also identifies the challenges and opportunities that arise in this digital transformation process, and offers strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of EBS implementation.

1. Integrity: The Foundation of Public Trust

Integrity is a key element that forms public trust in electronic-based public services. In the context of EBS, integrity includes the ability of regional apparatuses to carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the principles of ethics, transparency, and accountability. This study found that although many regional apparatuses have a high awareness of the importance of integrity, its implementation in the field is still often hampered by various factors. One of the main obstacles is the lack of an effective internal monitoring mechanism, so that the potential for misuse of digital systems remains.

The digitalization of public services requires a higher level of integrity compared to manual systems. In electronic-based services, data is a key asset that must be managed carefully to ensure its confidentiality, accuracy, and reliability. For example, misuse of data or manipulation of information in the system can damage public trust as a whole. Therefore, local governments need to implement stricter monitoring policies, such as periodic audits of the SPBE system, as well as building awareness among regional apparatuses about the importance of integrity in managing digital systems.

In addition, transparency in managing electronic-based systems is also an important step to strengthen integrity. Local governments can utilize technology to publish relevant information to the public in real time, such as financial reports, service performance, or implementation of government projects. This not only increases transparency, but also provides opportunities for the public to monitor and provide input on the services provided.

2. Professionalism: Competency Challenges in the Digital Era

Professionalism is another important factor that determines the success of SPBE implementation. Professionalism not only includes the technical ability of regional apparatuses in operating technology, but also includes a proactive work attitude, responsibility, and the ability to adapt to change. This study found that one of the main obstacles in implementing SPBE in Gorontalo Province is the competency gap between employees and job demands in the digital era.

Many employees still have difficulty understanding the new technology applied in SPBE. This is due to the lack of specific and ongoing training related to the use of SPBE applications. Most of the training provided is still general and does not provide an in-depth understanding of how the technology can be integrated into daily work. In addition, resistance to change is also a significant problem, where some employees tend to be reluctant to leave the old way of working that is considered comfortable.

To improve professionalism, local governments need to allocate sufficient resources for systematically designed training programs. This training should cover various aspects, from basic introduction to technology to the use of more complex SPBE applications. In addition, there needs to be a strategy that encourages employees to continue learning and improving their competencies, such as providing incentives or awards for employees who show the best performance in adopting digital technology. Professionalism can also be improved through the formation of a work team that has special expertise in the field of information technology. This team can function as a technical support center for other regional devices, so that any technical obstacles that arise can be resolved immediately without hindering the work process. This approach not only increases efficiency, but also helps build confidence among employees to use new technologies.

3. Commitment: The Foundation of Sustainable Transformation

The commitment of regional apparatuses to the implementation of SPBE is an element that is no less important in determining the success of digital transformation. This study found that although some organizational leaders showed a high commitment to SPBE, this was not yet evenly distributed across all levels of regional apparatuses. Many employees do not yet understand the vision and mission of SPBE, so they tend to see this digital transformation as an additional workload rather than an opportunity to improve service quality.

Low commitment is often caused by a lack of effective communication between leaders and employees. In many cases, organizational leaders fail to clearly convey the strategic objectives of SPBE, so that employees do not feel involved or have a sense of ownership of the program. In addition, concerns that new technology will replace their roles are also factors that reduce employee motivation to support digital transformation.

To build a stronger commitment, local governments need to create an inclusive and collaborative work culture. Organizational leaders must be actively involved in communicating the benefits and objectives of SPBE, as well as providing appreciation to

employees who contribute to the successful implementation of this program. In addition, promoting innovation through competitions or awards for creative ideas that support digitalization can be an effective way to increase employee commitment.

4. Synergy between Integrity, Professionalism, and Commitment

The results of this study indicate that integrity, professionalism, and commitment cannot stand alone, but must synergize to create an organizational culture that supports the implementation of SPBE. These three elements complement each other in building an electronic-based government system that is transparent, efficient, and accountable.

For example, high integrity without professionalism will result in an honest but inefficient system, while professionalism without integrity can open up opportunities for misuse of technology. On the other hand, a strong commitment without being supported by integrity and professionalism will only create temporary and unsustainable changes. Therefore, local governments need to adopt a holistic approach in building organizational culture, with a focus on strengthening core values that support the success of digital transformation.

5. Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of SPBE

In addition to internal challenges related to organizational culture, this study also identified several external challenges, such as lack of technological infrastructure, budget constraints, and community resistance to electronic-based services. However, these challenges can be overcome by utilizing existing opportunities, such as increasing access to information and communication technology in Gorontalo Province.

Local governments can work with the private sector to expand internet networks and provide the necessary technological devices. In addition, the use of analytical data to monitor the performance of electronic-based public services can be an effective tool to improve efficiency and accountability. This study confirms that the success of SPBE implementation is highly dependent on a supportive organizational culture. By strengthening the integrity, professionalism, and commitment of regional apparatuses, the Gorontalo Provincial Government can overcome various challenges and take advantage of opportunities to create more responsive and sustainable public services. The synergy between these three elements of organizational culture is a solid foundation for creating an effective and inclusive digital transformation.

CONCLUSION

This study has underlined the importance of the role of organizational culture in supporting the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (ESBS). Digital transformation in the public sector is not just about implementing technology, but also requires profound changes in the mindset, values, and behavior of the organization. Integrity,

professionalism, and commitment have proven to be three main pillars that support each other in creating an organizational ecosystem that is able to accommodate this major change.

Integrity provides the basis for transparency and accountability in managing digital systems, while professionalism ensures that regional apparatuses have the technical capabilities and work attitudes that support the implementation of ESBS. Commitment, on the other hand, is the driving force for maintaining the consistency and sustainability of digital transformation. These three elements must work synergistically to optimize the potential of technology in improving the quality of public services.

However, challenges such as resistance to change, competency gaps, and infrastructure limitations are still obstacles that must be overcome. For this reason, local governments need to take strategic steps by strengthening training, improving internal communication, and collaborating with various parties, including the private sector and the community, in supporting the implementation of ESBS. A holistic approach that includes technical and non-technical aspects is the key to the success of this digital transformation.

In closing, this study confirms that digitalization of public services is not an end in itself, but rather a tool to achieve better, more responsive, and more inclusive governance. Therefore, efforts to strengthen organizational culture must be a top priority in realizing the vision of an effective and sustainable electronic-based government. Thus, Gorontalo Province can be a real example of how digital transformation supported by a strong organizational culture can improve the quality of public services and community welfare.

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