

Village Officials' Competence in Digital-Based Services Using E-Office in Mekarwangi Village, Sumedang Regency

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ABSTRAK

Diberlakukannya aplikasi baru penunjang kerja organisasi sebagai bagian dari penerapan SPBE di Indonesia seringkali tidak diikuti dengan kesiapan aparatur pengelola. Desa sebagai tingkatan pemerintahan terendah ikut menghadapi permasalahan ini. E-office yang merupakan bentuk pelayanan administrasi berbasis digital di tingkat desa dinilai sebagai terobosan sekaligus tantangan bagi perangkat desa yang minim pengetahuan dan keahlian dalam mengoperasikan teknologi informasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kompetensi perangkat desa dalam mendukung operasionalisasi e-office dan bagaimana upaya dalam meningkatkan kompetensi perangkat desa untuk pelayanan berbasis digital menggunakan E-Office Desa di Desa Mekarwangi Kecamatan Tomo Kabupaten Sumedang. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis datanya menggunakan triangulasi data. Temuan penelitian ini adalah kompetensi perangkat Desa Mekarwangi masih minim menjadi kendala untuk mencapai tujuan yang diharapkan dimana kemampuan perangkat desa belum maksimal karena belum mendapatkan pendidikan dan pelatihan yang sesuai serta kurangnya perhatian pemerintah daerah atau pusat dalam memberikan fasilitas peningkatan kompetensi perangkat desa yang berkaitan dengan pengelolaan data potensi desa sebagai bahan *e-office*. Upaya yang dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi adalah dengan Pemerintah Sumedang rutin memberikan pelatihan dan sosialisasi pengoperasian layanan berbasis online yaitu e-office desa kepada perangkat maupun masyarakat desa, peningkatan kualitas dan penambahan kuantitas pada infrastruktur pendukung seperti jaringan internet yang mumpuni dan ketersediaan laptop, serta adanya penghargaan bagi desa yang sudah melaksanakan e-office secara penuh dan pembinaan bagi desa yang belum mengoperasikan e-office dengan baik.

Kata Kunci : Kompetensi, e-Office, Perangkat Desa

ABSTRACT

The implementation of new applications to support organizational work, integral to the adoption of SPBE in Indonesia, often encounters a lack of readiness among management officials. This challenge extends to the village level, the lowest tier of government, where the introduction of the

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E-office as a digital-based administrative service represents both a breakthrough and a formidable hurdle for village officials unfamiliar with information technology. This study aims to assess the competence of the village officials in facilitating the operationalization of the E-office and proposes strategies to enhance their digital service proficiency, focusing on Mekarwangi Village in Tomo District, Sumedang Regency. Employing a descriptive qualitative research approach, data collection involves interviews, observations, and documentation, with data triangulation as the analytical technique. The study reveals that the competence of the Mekarwangi Village officials is currently minimal, primarily due to a lack of adequate education, training, and insufficient support from local or central governments in providing facilities for enhancing the officials' competence in managing village potential data—a critical aspect of E-office operations. In response, the Sumedang government is actively addressing this issue by regularly conducting training and socialization programs on online-based services, specifically the village E-office, for village officials and communities. Efforts have been made to improve the quality and quantity of supporting infrastructure, such as internet network capabilities and the availability of laptops. To foster competitiveness among villages, the government is also instituting awards for those successfully implementing the E-office, accompanied by guidance for villages facing challenges in its optimal operation.

Keywords: *Competency, e-Office, Villages Officials*

Introduction

Village officials are frequently perceived as the most basic or lowest tier of government. However, they play a pivotal role as the forefront administrators of government and serve as the primary driving force behind empowerment and development within a village community. To establish a robust and targeted legitimacy in village governance, it is imperative to adhere to the principles of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness (Ahmad 2020).

An evident outcome stemming from the fundamental principles of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness, crucial for advancing village development, is reflected in the exemplary service delivered by village officials. The Village Minimum Service Standards outlined in Article 5 of Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 2 of 2017 encompass key facets such as the provision and dissemination of service information, population and land data, issuance of certificates, service simplification, and addressing public complaints. Achieving this minimum service standard necessitates the presence of high-caliber village officials who act as the focal point for service delivery at the local level. The overarching objective of promoting good governance and bureaucratic reform underscores the need to enhance the professionalism of government officials, both at the central and village levels, as highlighted

by Hertati et al. in 2022. Bureaucratic reform further aspires to cultivate proficient administrators capable of efficiently managing administration, commencing from the grassroots level (Nangameka dan Kusmana, 2022).

The caliber of human resources within village governance is discernible through factors such as educational background, attended training programs, and demonstrated skills in task execution and job responsibilities (Tarjo 2020). A notable hindrance to effective service provision in village government is the diminished work ability arising from officials' inadequate education and training levels (Prihantini, 2020).

Competency pertains to the essential abilities that individuals must possess to excel in their respective roles. Spencer and Spencer (1993:9) in Wibowo (2014:272-273), emphasize that competence serves as the foundational basis for individuals' characteristics, encompassing ways of thinking or behaving that endure over an extended period. It is a composite quality comprising both expertise (skill) and knowledge, representing an individual's capacity to execute tasks effectively ((Iqlima Azhar, 2013); (Hariyani 2016); (Akhmad Syarifudin, 2014). (Wibowo 2014:273). Wibowo (2014:273) identifies three key indicators of competency: 1) the ability to carry out tasks, 2) skills, and 3) attitudes as individual characteristics. While various experts propose diverse components that contribute to competency, this study specifically adopts the competency indicators for the sake of focus and clarity Wibowo (2014).

Competence is discernible through an individual's proficiency in fulfilling their responsibilities. Abilities are generally categorized into two main groups. Firstly, intellectual abilities encompass the capacity to perform various cognitive tasks, showcasing cognitive prowess. Secondly, physical abilities pertain to the aptitude for executing physical actions, highlighting the individual's physical competence (Latifah, 2018).

Skills, as a central component of competence, demonstrate a correlation between duration and frequency. The more frequently and intensively an individual engages in the same work, the greater their proficiency and efficiency in completing tasks. Those with high levels of skill tend to approach tasks with a sense of responsibility (Ahmad, 2020).

An individual's attitude, as a distinctive characteristic, manifests as a recurring pattern of behavior in the execution of their duties. When an individual possesses an attitude that aligns with and supports organizational goals, their approach to tasks reflects a commitment to achieving optimal outcomes (Ahmad, 2020). This embodiment of a positive attitude contributes to a more

accurate assessment of an individual's competency. Competence, being a critical factor, plays a pivotal role in determining the success of an organization. Elevated competency levels in individuals can significantly enhance the overall performance quality of an organization. Conversely, the inadequacy of competence among village officials may impede the disbursement of village funds in subsequent periods and result in administrative challenges, consequently impacting service delivery to the community (Rismawati 2019).

The competence of well-qualified village officials plays a pivotal role in the success of services. A service is deemed successful when individuals find it easy to address the challenges they encounter and express satisfaction with the services delivered by the service provider. In the public sector, where service stands as the primary output of the organization, organizational performance is a crucial dimension (Agus, dkk, 2007). Hence, there is a growing necessity for integrated services capable of addressing various needs comprehensively. Moreover, in this digital era, the shift towards online-based government services is becoming increasingly prevalent.

In alignment with this vision, the Sumedang Regency Government has introduced an application designed to streamline government services at the village level. This innovative solution is the Village e-Office, established with the aspiration of cultivating a village digital ecosystem towards a smart village. The Village e-Office consolidates all village services into a unified data repository, enhancing efficiency and accessibility. Noteworthy features of the Village e-Office include 1) Village Officials Performance Management; 2) Letters; 3) VILLAGE SAKIP; 4) BEAUTIFUL SYMPATHETIC VILLAGE; 5) Vaccination; 6) Village Monograph; 7) SIMEDOK; 8) Community Services; and 9) Village Website. These features collectively facilitate the seamless provision of village services by consolidating all components of the village database within one application. Notably, the Village e-Office is not confined to computer access; it can be utilized anywhere and at any time through the devices of village officials, exemplifying a flexible and user-friendly approach to digital governance.

The continuous enhancement of government services in the villages of Sumedang Regency, in response to evolving needs, necessitates a concurrent elevation of the competence of village officials in managing online-based services. The adoption of online services through the Village e-Office application not only aligns with the increasing demands but also offers residents the convenience of accessing services without the need to visit the village office physically. Individuals requiring documents or files from the village can either print them

directly from home or choose to visit the village office with prepared documents, providing a more flexible and efficient service delivery system.

The implementation of the sophisticated Village e-Office application necessitates that all village officials possess the ability to operate computers and access the internet, thereby enabling them to effectively utilize the application for service provision. While the Village e-Office is designed to simplify processes, it concurrently introduces new challenges related to the competence of village officials. In the case of Mekarwangi Village, situated in Tomo District, Sumedang Regency, and formed through the expansion of Darmawangsi Village in 2012, there are currently 9 village officials. However, not all of these officials have the requisite understanding to proficiently operate computers and navigate the internet.

The current infrastructure at the village office to facilitate digital services through the Village e-Office faces limitations, particularly in terms of internet connectivity. Unfortunately, Mekarwangi village has yet to be reached by a dedicated internet network, and as of now, the village office relies on hotspots generated from mobile internet networks using village mobile phones. This dependence on mobile networks often results in unstable internet connectivity for village officials, impeding the smooth operation of the Village e-Office applications. x

Based on the issues outlined above, the identified problems in the government of Mekarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency include:

1. **Insufficient Competence:** The inadequate quality of competence among Mekarwangi Village officials, with a majority unprepared for the use of IT technology.
2. **Lack of Understanding:** Limited understanding among Mekarwangi Village officials regarding the operation of the village e-office application.
3. **Supporting Facility Constraints:** The lack of supporting facilities, specifically the absence of adequate internet services in the Mekarwangi Village office.

After analyzing the background and identifying issues related to the competency of the Village Officials in providing digital-based services through the Village E-Office in Mekarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency, the research poses the following problem formulations:

1. How is the competence of village officials in digital-based services using Village E-Office in Mekarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency?
2. What efforts are being made to improve the competence of village officials for digital-

based services using Village E-Office in Mekarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency?

Research Methods

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The analysis of field findings data was presented comprehensively and in-depth, focusing on exploring and understanding the meaning derived from individuals and/or groups of people affected by social problems (Creswell, 2018).

The focus of this research was to investigate the competency of village officials in providing digital-based services, with a specific emphasis on utilizing the e-office as administrative support at the village level. Various references pertaining to research findings on village officials' competency were incorporated, drawing from diverse sources such as books, national and international journals, articles, and websites.

The data collection for this study employed non-participant observation, interviews, and documentation. Non-participant observation involved observing the usage of the e-Office application in Mekarwangi Village without direct involvement in the service activities. Interviews were conducted with several village officials, and documentation was gathered for relevant information needed in the data collection process. In terms of data analysis, the author utilized techniques such as data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Village Officials' Competence in Service Using Village E-Office

The provision of government services by officials for the community is a fundamental role, emphasizing the officials' responsibility to meet the community's needs. This underscores the significance of the officials' position in government services (Dudley, et al., 2015), as it plays a crucial role in defining the government's strength and dedication in delivering public services. This relationship illustrates the alignment between the objectives of government administration and the societal needs it aims to address.

Competency stands out as a crucial factor influencing the success of an organization, with an individual's high competency contributing significantly to the overall quality of organizational performance. According to Yuniningsih (2019), an official who, while working, exhibits traits such as sluggishness, verbosity, and rigidity, particularly when coupled with the acceptance of

gratuities, is deemed unworthy of assuming responsibility for providing community services. In the present context, there is a growing societal demand for officials characterized by energy, swiftness, simplicity, and efficiency. The ability of officials to move and act swiftly is increasingly vital as society navigates the challenges of the globalization era.

The limited competence of village officials poses a hindrance to attaining the envisioned goals. In assessing the competence of Mekarwangi Village officials concerning the services provided, the researchers employ indicators such as 1) the ability to execute tasks, 2) skills, and 3) individual characteristics encompassing attitudes.

a. Ability to carry out duties

The primary factor contributing to the limited capacity of the village government in managing village e-offices is the suboptimal proficiency of village officials. The capacity to perform tasks efficiently in optimizing services through the e-Office platform remains below average due to the lack of appropriate education and training for village officials.

Formal education significantly shapes an individual's competence. In Mekarwangi Village, there are 9 village officials, including a Village Head and 8 individuals in lower-ranking positions. The subsequent section will outline the formal educational background of each officials in Mekarwangi Village.

Table List of Village Officials and Their Education Background

NO	NAME	POSITION	EDUCATION
1	AGUS KUSWARA	VILLAGE HEAD	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
2	LILI PRAYUDI	SECRETARY	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
3	DANI HARDIAN	HEAD OF FINACE DIVISION	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
4	INTAN YULIA	HEAD OF PLANNING DIVISION	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
5	MIMIN RUSMINI	HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION AND GENERAL AFFAIRS	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
6	AGUS ROHMANTIANUS	GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COORDINATOR	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
7	AHMAD SAGITA	WELFARE COORDINATOR	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
8	GUGUN GUNARDI	PUBLIC SERVICE COORDINATOR	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

9	SUMARNA	VILLAGE SUB-DISTRICT CHIEF	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
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Source: Research Documentation Data, 2023

The table illustrates that the majority of village officials in Mekarwangi Village are high school graduates, constituting seven out of nine officials. Notably, none of the village officials have pursued education beyond the high school level, including university or advanced technical skills (SMK). This indicates that the knowledge acquired by village officials is limited to a general knowledge level, lacking a specific focus on the skills needed to leverage information technology for office administration, especially in the context of village administration.

In addition to formal education, skills acquired outside the formal education system, such as those obtained through courses and training programs, can significantly contribute to an individual's performance in carrying out duties. Expertise, recognized as a standard for assessing competency in the recruitment process, is not the primary criterion for village officials in Mekarwangi Village, particularly in utilizing technological tools for village administration. The village government's limited capacity in managing its potential stems from the underutilization of officials' capacities due to insufficient education and training. Furthermore, the collection of village potential data is often conducted by officials lacking competence in the field of village administration, highlighting a key gap in the village's administrative processes.

An illustrative example is the process of inputting village potential data into the e-office, a task assigned to village officials lacking expertise in both village administration and information technology. Currently, these officials manually collect data on village potential, utilizing extensive paper forms for the input. Subsequently, they are compelled to duplicate their efforts by manually entering the survey results into the computer, introducing inefficiencies and a heightened risk of input errors.

Moreover, concerning population administration service tasks overseen by the village, such as handling requests for change of domicile, creating domicile certificates, or other services directly required by the community, there are persistent complaints from residents regarding the service duration. The efficiency of service, particularly in the issuance of documents, is also contingent on the proficiency of village officials in operating the e-office. The officials designated to manage the e-office are not yet adept at employing office administration technology, as the process of inputting data for document issuance is still manual and not paperless. Despite the utilization of computers, the time required does not significantly

differ from the manual typewriter era. This lack of familiarity with e-office operations among assigned village officials necessitates adjustments to expedite and streamline the administrative processes.

The insufficient focus from regional or central government in providing facilities to enhance the competency of village officials in managing village potential data is a noteworthy concern. The current educational and training levels of village officials fall short of the desired standards, highlighting the need for both the village and regional government to consider and implement effective solutions.

When assessing the indicator of the ability to carry out tasks, it can be asserted that village officials demonstrate capability as tasks are ultimately completed. However, when considering effectiveness and efficiency, there is a need for significant attention and improvement in these areas.

b. Skills

In the pursuit of developing proficient skills, it becomes apparent that education and training, while essential, do not stand alone as the sole contributors. Proficiency is not only acquired through formal learning but also through continuous and repetitive task engagement. The more diligently and persistently an individual tackles a specific job, the higher the level of adaptation they attain. This heightened adaptability facilitates the mastery of the job, propelling the individual closer to achieving a skilled proficiency.

Examining both formal and non-formal education, particularly in the context of training, it is acknowledged that the Mekarwangi village officials, who serve as the focal point for village administration through the e-office, cannot be deemed as competent. Even concerning skills, the capacity of the village government to manage the e-office remains at a minimal level. The deficiency in competence is evident in the inadequate proficiency of village officials in operating IT equipment and navigating the associated ecosystem, causing a sluggish operationalization of the e-office. The managers responsible for the e-office lack the necessary skills, resulting in the continued use of a manual system for village services, rather than fully leveraging the capabilities of the e-office.

c. Attitude as personal characteristic

(Wibowo 2014) explained that individual characteristics, particularly one's attitude toward task execution, play a significant role in reflecting a person's competence. This attitude encompasses the individual's communication skills in the work environment, their level of work enthusiasm, and their professionalism in completing tasks with confidence. Wibowo suggests that

these aspects of attitude are integral components that contribute to and reflect an individual's overall competence.

Concerning communication abilities, village officials have demonstrated proficient implementation, particularly in fostering positive connections with the community. However, when specifically addressing the e-office operations that support digital administration services, it becomes evident that e-office managers need to achieve a comprehensive mastery of the material. Researcher observations reveal that managers encounter challenges in effectively conveying information related to the e-office, making it difficult to transfer operational knowledge to the public and other interested parties seeking in-depth understanding about the e-office.

The researcher's observations further revealed a notable inclination among village officials to eschew the use of the e-office as the primary medium for conducting village administration. These findings suggest a suboptimal level of work enthusiasm among village officials when it comes to implementing the e-office in administrative services. Instead of being the central tool, the e-office is relegated to a supporting role. This implies that village officials assigned to operate the e-office may encounter challenges in swiftly and comprehensively mastering its functionalities.

This phenomenon can also shed light on the self-confidence levels of e-office managers. High levels of confidence in executing a task typically correlate with a tendency to complete the job efficiently and accurately. However, as evidenced by the researchers' observations, e-office managers often lack confidence in their ability to operate the e-office. The primary factor contributing to this lack of confidence is their limited IT capabilities, which, in turn, make the utilization of e-office for administration feel like a new 'burden' in government administration.

Efforts to Improve the Competence of Village Officials for Digital-Based Services Using Village E-Office in Mekarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency

Education and training undeniably play a crucial role in shaping an individual's competence. Nevertheless, the competence of village officials can be further enhanced through active participation in training and coaching sessions tailored to their specific job responsibilities. The absence of effective socialization regarding the continuous development and changes in the village e-office application has led to confusion among village officials, leaving them unaware of the latest features. Establishing a routine and accessible framework for e-office training for every village official becomes imperative in fostering a synergy in digital-based administration at the grassroots level of government. This effort is essential for keeping officials abreast of

advancements and ensuring optimal utilization of the e-office.

In light of these observations, it is imperative for the governments of Sumedang Regency and Tomo District to conduct comprehensive socialization on the operation of online-based services, particularly the village e-office, targeting both village officials and communities. This outreach effort can be executed through various channels, either online or offline. Online socialization may leverage platforms such as WhatsApp groups at both village and RT/RW levels to disseminate information effectively. Simultaneously, offline outreach strategies, such as distributing brochures or displaying posters, can be employed to reach a wider audience and reinforce awareness about the functionalities and benefits of the village e-office.

Additionally, to ensure the sustained integration of the e-office in administrative business processes at the village level, regular evaluations should be conducted in each village. These evaluations should assess the successful implementation of the e-office, both internally for village administration matters and externally in addressing community service needs. A clear categorization with specific measurements must be established to gauge the progress of the e-office program implementation at the village level. Similar to assessing e-Government implementation, the categorization should have defined levels to ascertain the extent of ICT implementation in the assessed village, providing a structured framework for ongoing improvement and optimization.

As part of a proactive strategy, it is advisable to institute an annual reward system for villages that successfully implement the e-office, coupled with additional guidance and support for villages that have not optimally embraced e-office practices. Beyond being perceived as an initiative to expedite progress, this approach serves the dual purpose of motivating each village and its officials to actively and effectively adapt to the use of the e-office.

In addition to human resource development, enhancing supporting facilities is imperative. As highlighted earlier, the current infrastructure to support e-office implementation in Mekarwangi Village remains limited. Therefore, it is crucial to upgrade the quality and augment the quantity of supporting infrastructure. This could involve initiatives such as boosting network bandwidth and expanding internet access points in Mekarwangi Village through coordination with the Tomo District Government and collaboration with internet service providers. Furthermore, ensuring the availability of mobile devices, such as laptops for each village official, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of e-office usage, enabling flexibility in work locations.

Conclusion

Village officials are often perceived as the lowest tier of government, yet their competence plays a pivotal role in delivering services to the community, particularly in the case of online-based services such as the e-office in Mekarwangi Village. The research indicates that the competence of Mekarwangi Village officials is currently minimal, posing a challenge to achieving desired objectives. This limitation stems from the underutilization of officials' abilities due to inadequate education and training, coupled with a lack of attention from regional or central government in providing facilities to enhance the competency of village officials in managing potential village data.

To address these challenges, the Sumedang Regency government should proactively conduct intensive training sessions and socialization programs on the operation of online-based services, specifically the village e-office, for village officials. Simultaneously, efforts should be directed towards improving the quality and increasing the quantity of supporting infrastructure, such as upgrading internet network capabilities and ensuring the availability of laptops.

Recognizing the need for a competitive stimulus among villages, it is essential to establish awards for those that successfully implement the e-office, along with guidance and support for villages facing challenges in operating the e-office effectively. This multi-faceted approach, encompassing education, infrastructure enhancement, and incentivization, is crucial for fostering competence and advancing the successful implementation of online-based services at the village level.

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