

Public Sector Digital Transformation: Analysis of Digital Literacy of Government Apparatus in Kepatihan Village, Menganti District, Gresik Regency

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Abstract

Digital transformation in the public sector is a strategic step to improve public service efficiency, transparency, and quality. However, the success of this transformation is highly dependent on the level of digital literacy of government officials as implementers of digital policies and programs. This study aims to analyze the digital literacy of government officials in Kepatihan Village, Menganti Subdistrict, Gresik Regency, in the context of public sector digital transformation. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and analysis of related documents. The research participants were government officials from Kepatihan Village who were directly involved in implementing digital technology in public services. The results showed that the level of digital literacy of Kepatihan Village government officials varied, with most officials demonstrating a basic understanding of digital technology but still needing more advanced technical capabilities and practical applications. Factors such as age, education, and work experience influence this level of digital literacy. In addition, the study found infrastructure constraints and technical support that still need to be improved to smooth the digital transformation process. This research provides recommendations to improve the digital literacy of government officials through continuous training and mentoring, as well as strengthening information technology infrastructure. Thus, the digital transformation of the public sector in Kepatihan Village is expected to run more effectively and provide maximum benefits to the community.

Keywords: digital transformation, digital literacy, public sector, government apparatus

1. Introduction

The powerful wave of globalization is driving technological, informational, and communicative advancements, leading to significant changes in governance across sectors, from business to government. The evolution of digital technology has demonstrated its positive impact on various aspects of life. When applied correctly, it has the potential to enhance service performance and function, thereby bolstering public trust in government operations (Fitriansyah & Nuryakin, 2021). Digital transformation, which encompasses not just the adoption of new technologies but also fundamental shifts in organizational culture, business processes, and operational models, is at the heart of this revolution. In this modern era, digital transformation has become one of the main drivers of change in various sectors. Digital transformation refers to integrating digital technology into all aspects of an organization's operations, resulting in fundamental changes in how businesses operate and deliver value to customers (Iswanto, 2021a). This phenomenon is fueled by rapid advances in information and communication technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and cloud computing.



Improving operational efficiency, providing better services, and maintaining competitiveness encourages organizations to carry out digital transformation (Iswanto, 2021b). Many agencies are adopting new technologies to automate business processes, optimize services, and improve data analysis for better decision-making. In addition, changes in the behavior of an increasingly *digital-savvy* society also require the government to adapt quickly to the community's needs and expectations. However, the digital transformation process has challenges. One of the main challenges is resistance to change from within the organization. Apparatus who are accustomed to traditional ways of working often feel threatened by new technologies and changes in organizational culture (Firdaus et al., 2021; Iswanto, 2022; Pujihartati et al., 2022; Rahardi et al., 2020). Therefore, this research is also essential to understand digital transformation's social and economic impacts and how policies and regulations can optimally support this process.

However, the development of information technology in the developing world is proportional to the development of digital literacy (Nursalam et al., 2020). Digital literacy is the ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and networks to find, evaluate, use, and create information healthily and ethically that includes a variety of skills needed to interact effectively with digital technology and media and understand their impact on personal and community life (Adnjani et al., 2021). Four pillars of Digital Literacy must be considered: digital skills, ethics, culture, and safety (Kementerian et al., 2020). With this problem, it is necessary to build a culture of digital literacy, especially in the environment of public organizations, to transform governance digitally. Previous studies state that the performance and competence of village government officials still need to improve; the professionalism of village government officials is low, less effective, and less innovative (Syamsir et al., 2023). On the other hand, the village apparatus still needs to have an appropriate literacy level in the digital era. In particular, the village apparatus' poor scores on the digital literacy component, as well as the lack of ability to use digital technology products in an applicable manner in daily activities, are the things that cause the village apparatus' literacy skills to have a poor average score (Fitriansyah & Nuryakin, 2021).

This research was conducted in Kepatihan Village, Menganti District, Gresik Regency. Kepatihan Village was chosen because of the demands of the Gresik district government in organizing the digital transformation of village services through the Village Government Administration Information System (SIAP) (Octavia & Suprobowati, 2023). The lack of competence of village apparatus human resources in digital literacy is an urgency where the direction of Kepatihan village development is an intelligent *village* through IT with the village SIAP. The problems faced using the website need to be appropriately managed, and there needs to be more information and village data that the wider community can access for the needs of accountability, transparency, and accountability of the village government. This research also has another urgency: the importance of apparatus capacity in understanding and using digital platforms to support performance. Increasing the capacity of civil servants to understand and use digital platforms is very urgent to ensure optimal organizational performance (Fitriansyah & Nuryakin, 2021). Civil servants skilled in digital technology can improve work efficiency and effectiveness, make decisions based on accurate data, and adapt to ever-evolving technological changes (Astinayanti et al., 2024). In addition, this capability



also supports better collaboration and communication, maintains security and compliance with regulations, and encourages innovation and change in organizational culture. For this reason, it is necessary to develop the capacity of human resources to build the digital literacy of village government officials.

Literacy culture is a reflection of a society's progress, and it requires individuals to continuously build their capacity, supported by well-established policies, infrastructure, and management (Suswandari, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to develop a model for enhancing digital literacy, particularly a digital literacy culture for village government officials, to realize the potential of smart village governance. The Smart Village program, as a digital village initiative, is a testament to the movement's goal of maximizing public services and increasing efficiency through the use of information technology in rural areas, particularly those where the bottom of the pyramid group is located (Fitriansyah & Nuryakin, 2021).

2. Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the digital literacy of village government officials in the digital transformation of the public sector. This approach allows researchers to understand the phenomenon being studied and reveal the meaning of the experiences experienced by informants (Moleong, 2017). With a descriptive qualitative design, this study aims to provide a detailed description of the digital literacy competencies of village government officials and their influence on improving the quality of public services. This research was conducted in Kepatihan Village Government, Menganti District, Gresik Regency. This location was chosen because the village has started implementing a village information system as part of the digital transformation effort. The informants in this study consisted of village government officials who were directly involved in the administration and delivery of public services. The informants were selected by purposive sampling based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. This approach allows researchers to explore in-depth information from individuals who have direct knowledge and experience related to the research topic.

Table 1. Research Informants

No.	Informants	duties and functions
1.	Head of General Affairs and Administration	manage administrative processes, digitize documents, and ensure the operation of village IT devices and infrastructure
2.	Head of Planning	prepare and manage village development plans, coordinate data collection and analysis for planning, and ensure integration of plans with applicable policies and regulations
3.	Head of Public Service	manage and improve the quality of public services in villages, and ensure the implementation and utilization of digital technology to facilitate access to services

Source: processed by the author (2024)

The data in this study were collected through several techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with informants to explore information related to digital literacy competencies, experience in using



technology, challenges faced, and the impact on public services. Direct observation was conducted to see how village officials use technology in their daily activities so that researchers can understand the context of technology use and identify relevant practices. In addition, analysis of relevant documents, such as the electronic-based government system index (SPBE), activity reports, and social media and village website captures, complemented the data obtained from interviews and observations. The data obtained was analyzed using the Miles, Huberman Saldana analysis technique. To ensure data validity and reliability, this study used data triangulation by combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. With this comprehensive approach, it is hoped that the research can make a significant contribution to understanding and improving the digital literacy competencies of village government officials to improve public services.

3. Results and Discussion

The aspects of digital literacy used to analyze this research are the concepts put forward by Hague & Payton who put forward indicators in digital literacy variables including Functional skills Beyond, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Ability to Find and Select Information, Critical Thinking and Evaluation, Cultural and Social Understanding, and E-Safety (Hague & Payton, 2010).

a. Functional skill Beyond

Functional skills capabilities. These skills include more advanced and strategic capabilities needed to perform more complex tasks and to adapt quickly to technological developments (Rukmana et al., 2024). Functional skills Beyond can include using complex files and applications in the context of village government Beyond refers to skills beyond basic information and communication technology (ICT) apparatus. The ICT skills of the Keptihan village government apparatus demonstrate a basic but essential level of expertise in supporting the effectiveness of digital transformation in the village.

Table 2. Digital Capability of Keptihan Village Apparatus

No.	Position	Digital Proficiency				
		Microsoft Office	Whatsapp	Zoom	Email	Social media
1	Village Head	v	v	v	v	-
2	Village Secretary	v	v	v	v	v
3	Head of Planning	v	v	v	v	v
4	Head of Finance	v	v	v	v	v
5	Head of General & Administration	v	v	v	v	v
6	Head of Government	v	v	v	v	v
7	Head of Public Service	v	v	v	v	v
8	Head of the community welfare section	v	v	v	v	v
9	Head of Glintung hamlet	v	v	-	v	-
10	Head of Bendil hamlet	v	v	v	v	-
11	Head of Ngasinan Hamlet	v	v	-	-	v

Source: Author's Process (2024)



The data above shows that most village apparatuses have solid skills in Microsoft Office, WhatsApp, Zoom, and email, and most are also active on social media. The Village Head is proficient in Microsoft Office, WhatsApp, Zoom, and email but does not use social media, which may indicate a focus on formal communication. The Village Secretary and the Kasi (Planning et al. & TU, Government, Services, and Welfare) demonstrate complete proficiency across all platforms, reflecting comprehensive communication and administrative management skills. On the other hand, Kasun Glitung and Kasun Bendil have good skills in Microsoft Office, WhatsApp, and email but need to gain in Zoom and social media. Kasun Ngasinan demonstrated skills in Microsoft Office and social media but needed to improve in WhatsApp, Zoom, and email. These variations reflect differences in responsibilities and communication needs, which must be addressed to ensure consistency and effectiveness in the village administration and communication. These skills support day-to-day administrative activities, report generation, and data processing required for village management and reporting.

While the ICT capabilities of village officials already cover the basic skills required for technology management, there is potential to enhance their skills further. Additional training in advanced software usage, digital content management, and information security could expand their capabilities and improve the effectiveness of technology use in public service delivery (Chohan & Hu, 2020). Continued support in the form of advanced training and access to technology resources is expected to strengthen the village apparatus' ICT skills so that they can more effectively carry out their duties in the digital era.

b. Creativity

In the context of public sector digital transformation, creativity is vital in optimizing digital technology to produce innovations in public services and communication. Kepatihan Village government officials have demonstrated the ability to create diverse digital products or outputs by utilizing various digital technologies. One concrete example is the utilization and management of the village website and Instagram account (@pemdes_kepatihan), which displays various information and public services online.



Figure 1. Village Website and Instagram Account of Kepatihan Village Government

(Source: <https://desakepatihan.gresikkab.go.id/>)



The data above shows that the Kepatihan Village Government actively manages and publicizes information on village activities through digital platforms. By utilizing the village website and social media, the village government ensures transparency and accessibility of information to the community. This approach increases community engagement and supports an open and participatory digital culture at the village level. The village website features a dedicated menu showcasing local MSME products, providing the community with a platform to exhibit their products to a wider audience. This not only enhances the *visibility of* MSMEs but also bolsters the local economy by offering a digital platform for promotion. This emphasis on supporting local businesses should make stakeholders feel empowered and economically secure.

The government apparatus's ability to think creatively and imaginatively is also evident in various aspects of planning and digital content development. In terms of planning, they can identify village needs and potentials that can be optimized through digital platforms. In content development, village officials collaborate with KKN students to create exciting and informative content for the village website and Instagram. This is based on research conducted by Purwanta et al. (2024), where students assigned to social projects can help the village government manage village websites and other digital skills. This collaboration brings innovative new perspectives and ideas, enriches the content presented, and increases engagement with the community.

c. Collaboration

Collaboration is an essential aspect of the digital transformation of the public sector, which allows synergy between various parties to achieve common goals (Pongtambing et al., 2024). In Kepatihan Village, the collaboration of government officials with the Gresik Regency Communication and Informatics Office plays a vital role in developing and assisting the village website. The Kepatihan Village government officials have demonstrated exemplary skills in participating in the digital space. The collaboration with the Communication and Informatics Office has helped improve their skills in managing and utilizing digital platforms for various administrative and public service purposes (Firmansyah et al., 2024).



Figure 2. Training on Village Website Management
(Source: Gresik Government Regency, 2022)



The training and mentoring provided by the Communication and Informatics Office have strengthened the apparatus's technical capabilities in operating and maintaining the village website. This allows the village apparatus to participate more actively in the digital space, both in disseminating information, interacting with the community, and managing digital data and services. The ability of the Kepatihan Village government apparatus to explain and negotiate ideas and concepts is also reflected in this collaboration. During the training and mentoring process, the village apparatus must be able to convey the needs and challenges faced and discuss various ideas and solutions offered. The village apparatus must also be able to absorb and implement the ideas provided by the Communication and Informatics Office and adapt to the suggestions and input received. This ability is essential to ensure the digital transformation runs smoothly according to local needs and conditions. The collaboration between the village government and the Communication and Informatics Office not only increases the technical capacity of the village apparatus but also strengthens the relationship between institutions, which ultimately positively impacts the quality of public services. By involving various parties and utilizing the digital space effectively, the Kepatihan Village government apparatus can continue developing its capabilities and improving community services. Continued support from the Communication and Information Service and ongoing training are expected to encourage more productive and innovative collaboration in the future (Marion & Fixson, 2021).

d. Communication

Communication through digital technology is an essential skill in today's information age, especially for village government officials. An effective village apparatus should utilize various digital platforms to establish efficient communication with the community, colleagues, and other stakeholders. These include tools such as email for formal correspondence, instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp for quick and direct communication, and video conferencing platforms such as Zoom for virtual meetings and remote discussions (Nathanael & Sos, 2019). Kepatihan Village government officials have demonstrated their proficiency in using a variety of digital communication platforms. They effectively utilize social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp to disseminate important information to the community, actively participate in online discussions, address questions, and provide clarifications on village policies and programs. This effective use of digital platforms not only strengthens the relationship between the village government and the community but also enhances transparency and accountability in governance. Through training and mentoring, village officials have been equipped with the skills to use clear and understandable language, and to leverage various digital features to communicate their messages more effectively.

This achievement is a result of the unwavering commitment of the Gresik Regent in implementing the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). The implementation of SPBE in Gresik Regency is a top priority, as evidenced by the Gresik Regency Regent Regulation Number 28 of 2023 and the Regent's Decree Number 043/305/437.12/2023. These regulations outline the comprehensive SPBE Architecture of the Gresik Regency Government for 2023 – 2026, demonstrating the Regent's dedication to digital transformation.



Table 3. SPBE Index Gresik Regency 2021-2023

No.	Year	Index Value
1.	2023	4,28
2.	2022	3,27
3.	2021	3.31

Source: (Gresik Government Regency, 2024)

The data above shows that Gresik Regency's achievements in implementing SPBE increased significantly from 2021 to 2023. With an SPBE index value of 4.28 in 2023, Gresik Regency ranked sixth nationally for district governments. This was achieved due to the strong commitment of the Gresik Regency government to digital transformation down to the village level so that communication and coordination between the local government and the community became more efficient and effective. The ability of village officials to communicate well on social media and respond responsively and politely to questions and feedback from the community demonstrates a high level of professionalism. This is important for building community trust in the village government. Understanding the audience improves communication effectiveness and strengthens community involvement in village programs and activities, resulting in more harmonious and productive collaboration. The continued support from the Office of Communication and Information in the form of training and mentoring is a testament to our commitment to improving the digital communication skills of Kepatihan Village government officials, ensuring they are more effective in this digital era and beyond.

e. Ability to Find and Select Information

The ability of the Kepatihan Village government apparatus to search for and investigate information plays a vital role in supporting the digital transformation of the public sector. Access to various digital information sources allows village officials to search for relevant information effectively and efficiently. They utilize the internet, online databases, and other digital platforms to obtain data and information for decision-making and village program planning. Village officials are also trained in using search engines, government portals, and digital applications to access regulations, guidelines, and resources to assist them in performing administrative and public service tasks. This is based on the results of an interview with the Planning Head, which is as follows:

"Although there are efforts to utilize digital technology in services and administration, several obstacles still need to be overcome to implement and optimize digital systems in Kepatihan Village. Village officials face challenges in accessing and using technology effectively, as well as in increasing the use of digital systems by the community."

In addition, the ability to investigate information also involves verifying and validating the data obtained. Village officials not only collect information but also ensure that the information is accurate, relevant, and trustworthy. In this case, they use various techniques and digital tools to evaluate the credibility of information sources, such as checking the author's authority, publication date, and cross-referencing with other sources. This capability is crucial to prevent the spread of false or misleading information, which can negatively impact village policies and programs. Through training and mentoring from the Communication and



Information Service, Kepatihan Village government officials have improved their skills in searching for and investigating information. They are trained to think critically and analytically in assessing the information obtained, as well as to use sophisticated digital tools in the process of searching and investigating information. These skills increase the efficiency of the village apparatus' work and improve the quality of public services they provide. With precise and accurate information, village apparatus can make better decisions and develop more effective programs for community welfare. Continued support in the form of training and access to digital resources is expected to continue to improve these capabilities.

f. Critical Thinking and Evaluation

Critical thinking and evaluation skills are essential in the digital transformation of the public sector, especially in the context of information management and utilization. The Kepatihan Village government apparatus has shown improvement in this regard by developing skills to contribute and analyze information. However, there are significant obstacles regarding transparency and accountability in reporting development implementation at the village level. The village government is still less transparent and accountable in reporting development implementation, as evidenced by the absence of village planning documents such as the Village Government Work Plan (RKPDDes) and the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes), as well as performance report data that is not uploaded via the village website. After researchers conducted interviews and requested the data, the village government was reluctant to provide the data.

In the decision-making and program planning process, village officials should not only rely on available information, but also apply a critical thinking approach to evaluate the relevance and accuracy of the data. It's crucial that they conduct in-depth analysis to understand the context of the information, identify potential bias or errors, and consider the implications of the data obtained. This ability is not just important, it's urgent to ensure that decisions made are based on valid and accountable information.

g. Cultural and Social Understanding

Cultural and social understanding is a crucial aspect of the digital transformation of the public sector, especially in the context of information delivery and interaction with the community. The Kepatihan Village government apparatus shows deep attention to the local social and cultural context, which is reflected in the management of the village website and Instagram account (@pemdes_kepatihan). The village website and Instagram are used to convey administrative information and public services and celebrate and promote cultural and social activities in the community. For example, through these platforms, village officials publicize various local events and traditions, such as the annual *sedekah bumi* celebration. Other cultural events and community activities, such as local festivals and community events, are also actively featured. This helps preserve and promote the richness of local culture, strengthens community identity, and enhances the sense of togetherness among residents.



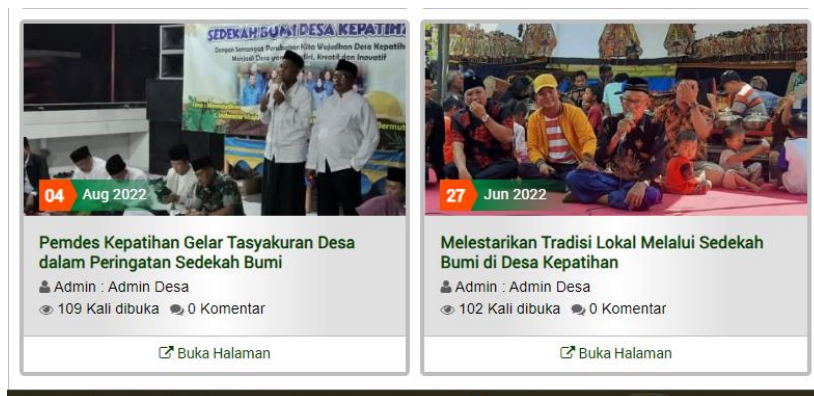


Figure 3. Article about local festival in Kepatihan village
(Source: <https://desakepatihan.gresikkab.go.id/?cari=sedekah>)

This culturally sensitive content management ensures the information presented is relevant and aligned with local values and traditions. The village apparatus works to understand and respect the cultural context in every communication made through digital media and ensures that the content reflects and supports the social life of the local community. With a deep understanding of the social and cultural context, village officials can build better relationships with the community, increase citizen participation and engagement in village activities, and effectively promote a positive image of the village. Support in the form of training related to cultural sensitivity and locally appropriate digital content management is expected to continue to strengthen this understanding so that digital transformation can be better aligned with the needs and values of local communities (Zein, 2023).

h. E-Safety

Digital security is an essential pillar in digital literacy that protects information and data stored, processed, or transmitted through information and communication technology (Aksenta et al., 2023). In the context of the village government apparatus, digital security relates to protecting personal and sensitive data and maintaining the integrity of information systems used in public administration and services. Digital security is essential for village government officials to ensure that the data and information they manage remain safe and protected from potential threats. By maintaining digital security, officials can prevent data leaks, misuse of information, and attacks that can disrupt village operations. The Kepatihan Village Government anticipates this by subscribing to a premium Village Information System (SID). The following is a statement from the Head of Service of the Kepatihan Village Government:

“Kepatihan Village uses premium SID, providing a more straightforward, attractive appearance and increased security. The premium SID offers comprehensive and easy-to-use features, including various additional menus. Membership in the Open Desa community allows villages to share information and take part in online training, increasing technological capacity at the village level”.

The above statement shows that the Kepatihan Village Government is taking proactive steps to improve digital security by subscribing to a premium Village Information System (SID). Using the premium SID, the village has gained a more straightforward and attractive



appearance and improved security features and functionality. Membership in the Open Desa community further supports technological capacity building through information sharing and online training. These measures reflect efforts to prevent data leaks, misuse of information, and attacks that could disrupt village operations.

4. Conclusion

The study results indicate that Kepatihan Village officials already have strong fundamental skills in using digital technology. They demonstrate good abilities in Advanced Functional Skills, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Ability to Search and Select Information, Critical Thinking and Evaluation, and Cultural and Social Understanding. However, several areas still need to be further developed, such as strengthening advanced technical skills, creativity in digital content, and more effective collaboration. Although most village officials have mastered basic digital technology skills such as Microsoft Office, WhatsApp, and email, there are variations in using other digital platforms such as social media and Zoom. This indicates the need for additional training to address the skills gap and increase the effectiveness of technology use.

The creative abilities of Kepatihan Village officials in utilizing digital technology have been proven in the management of active village websites and social media. However, there is still untapped potential for further innovation and optimization of digital content. Collaboration with the Communication and Information Service has significantly improved technical and communication skills in the digital space, but ongoing support is crucial to ensure consistency and effectiveness. The ability of officials to search, investigate, and evaluate information has improved, but there is still room for growth in critical thinking and data verification. Good cultural and social understanding is reflected in digital content that is relevant and sensitive to the local context, and it is important to stress the significance of this understanding in engaging the community. Efforts to improve digital security through the use of premium SIDs demonstrate awareness of the importance of data protection. To further enhance the digital literacy of Kepatihan Village Government officials, it is recommended to carry out advanced training, encourage digital creativity, strengthen collaboration with related agencies, improve critical thinking skills, understand cultural and social contexts more deeply, and tighten digital security through system updates and best practices.

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