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Implementing SIMANTAP for Personnel Administration Services in Samboja District: An Edward III Policy Implementation Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation in public administration is a strategic effort to achieve governance that is effective, efficient, and accountable. This study examines the implementation of the Rapid Introductory Letter Administration Service System (SIMANTAP) in Samboja District as a digital innovation in personnel services, aiming to identify factors that hinder its optimal operation. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Informants included the Head of Samboja District, the Head of the General and Personnel Subdivision, and SIMANTAP operators at district and village levels. Data were analyzed through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, using Edward III's policy implementation model, encompassing communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The findings indicate that initial socialization of SIMANTAP reached 85% of target personnel but lacked ongoing communication. While 90% of staff demonstrated readiness and positive commitment, only 60% had stable access to functional computers and reliable internet. No dedicated budget exists in the regional budget (APBD), and structured monitoring mechanisms are absent. The study concludes that SIMANTAP has strong potential as a district-level e-government model, but its adoption is constrained by limited technological infrastructure, inadequate budgetary support, and a lack of systematic evaluation. Strengthening policy guidance, enhancing staff capacity, modernizing ICT infrastructure, and allocating budgets are critical to ensuring sustainable and effective implementation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought major changes to various sectors of life, including the government sector. Governments around the

world are required to adapt to the digital era in order to respond to increasingly complex public service demands, as highlighted in studies on digital transformation in the public sector [1]. One effort is the implementation of the e-government concept, which refers to the use of digital technology to improve the quality of public services, accelerate bureaucratic processes, and promote transparency and accountability in government administration [2].

In Indonesia, the implementation of e-government is officially regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 95 of 2018 concerning the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). This regulation emphasizes that the government, both central and regional, must use information and communication technology to enhance service quality, a view consistent with the principles of modern digital governance [3]. SPBE covers various sectors, including correspondence management, personnel administration, planning, budgeting, and data and information management, all of which require integrated digital systems to run effectively [4].

Nevertheless, field realities show that implementing e-government does not always run smoothly. Various obstacles remain, such as limited technology infrastructure, a common issue in developing digital government environments [5]. In addition, low digital literacy among apparatuses also affects the effectiveness of implementation, as found in multiple studies on public sector digital adaptation [6]. Budget constraints often hinder system development and maintenance, an issue widely identified in policy implementation research [7]. Resistance to changes in work culture from manual to digital methods also plays a significant role, reflecting classic challenges in administrative reform [8]. These challenges occur not only at the national level but also at the regional and district levels, where variations in resources and readiness are more evident [9].

Samboja District, one of the districts in Kutai Kartanegara Regency with a fairly large area and comprising ten urban villages and three rural villages, has attempted to adopt digital-based service innovation through the development of the Rapid Introductory Letter Administration Service System (SIMANTAP) application. SIMANTAP is designed to manage personnel administration requests digitally, including submission modules for periodic salary increases (KGB), promotions (KENPA), leave, and retirement. The system enables online submission, digital verification by the personnel office, and the generation of output documents such as approval letters or official personnel records. This application is intended to simplify the process of submitting various personnel administration needs digitally, replacing manual processes that take time and require physical presence [10].

Before SIMANTAP existed, personnel administration processes were carried out conventionally. Employees had to come directly to the district office with physical documents, submit their files, and wait for a lengthy verification process, a situation commonly found in non-digitized administrative environments [11]. This was less effective, especially for employees living far from the district office. The presence of SIMANTAP is expected to address these issues by providing digital services that are faster, more practical, and more efficient, aligning with the goals of public administration modernization [12].

Although the SIMANTAP application has provided positive impacts, its implementation is not without obstacles. One of the main challenges is the limited technology infrastructure, especially unstable internet access, which often becomes a major

barrier to e-government implementation at the district level [13]. Based on data on personnel service requests and SIMANTAP usage from January to December 2024 at the Samboja District Office, a total of 82 civil servant profiles have been recorded in the database. Of the 38 employees who submitted services such as promotion, periodic salary increases, leave, and retirement, only 18 used the SIMANTAP application, while 20 still relied on manual submission. These data support findings from other studies showing that the adoption rate of digital personnel administration systems tends to be slow in early stages [14].

Table 1. 2024 Service Request Data

No	Month	Request				Application Usage	
		KGB	KENPA	Leave	Retirement	Yes	No
1	January	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	February	1	1	0	0	0	2
3	March	2	1	0	0	0	3
4	April	1	4	0	0	4	1
5	May	0	1	0	0	1	0
6	June	1	0	1	1	1	2
7	July	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	August	0	0	0	2	0	2
9	September	1	0	0	0	1	0
10	October	1	0	0	0	0	1
11	November	13	0	0	0	7	6
12	December	5	0	0	2	4	3
	Total	25	7	1	5	18	20

During 2024, there were 38 personnel administration requests: 25 for periodic salary increases (KGB), 7 for promotion (KENPA), 1 for leave, and 5 for retirement. Of these 38 requests, only 18 (47 percent) were submitted via the SIMANTAP application, while 20 (53 percent) were submitted manually. These figures indicate that the use of SIMANTAP remains minimal, a typical pattern in the early phase of e-government implementation [15].

Based on the phenomenon described above, this study aims to examine the implementation quality of SIMANTAP by evaluating it across Edward III's four key variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. In addition, the study seeks to identify the main inhibitors that limit the adoption and effective functioning of SIMANTAP at the district level, including technological, organizational, and human resource constraints. Finally, the research aims to explore policy and operational improvements that can be recommended to enhance SIMANTAP's performance, increase adoption among personnel, and ensure that the system functions effectively as a digital-based personnel administration tool.

This study uses George C. Edward III's policy implementation model, which emphasizes four main variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure [16]. The use of this model is relevant because many digital innovation policies in local government depend on how these four elements interact during implementation [17].

Thus, this study is expected not only to provide evaluation material for Samboja District but also to serve as a reference and learning model for other districts in developing

digital-based public service innovations to realize a modern, responsive, and accountable government.

2. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, a method that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observable behavior. Qualitative research is carried out in natural settings and is exploratory, a characteristic commonly emphasized in discussions of qualitative inquiry [18]. This approach was chosen because it can understand the meaning behind certain behaviors and has the potential to discover new theories relevant to the cultural context being studied.

The research was conducted at the Samboja District Office, Kutai Kartanegara Regency. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 7 informants purposively selected based on their roles and involvement with the SIMANTAP application. These included the Head of Samboja District, the Head of the General, Governance, and Personnel Subdivision, and five operator staff members at the district and village levels. Saturation was reached when no new themes emerged after the sixth interview. Secondary data were collected from the literature, including books, journals, research reports, articles, and online writings, related to the implementation of digital applications.

Data collection techniques included literature review, interviews, and documentation. A total of seven interview sessions were conducted, each lasting approximately 45–60 minutes. Interview questions were designed around Edward III's variables, including communication (e.g., awareness of SIMANTAP socialization, clarity of instructions), resources (e.g., access to computers, internet stability), disposition (e.g., attitudes toward digitalization), and bureaucratic structure (e.g., clarity of responsibilities, monitoring mechanisms). Observation focused not only on socialization events and participant attendance but also on staff interaction with the application, workflow processes, and verification procedures. Documentation included service request records, training materials, and screenshots of SIMANTAP outputs.

Furthermore, all data obtained were analyzed through the stages of classification, reduction, and categorization to identify thematic patterns relevant to the research focus. Codes were developed using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches: initial codes were based on Edward III's variables, and additional codes emerged from the data (inductive). A small codebook listing main codes, subcodes, and examples is provided in Appendix A. The data analysis technique used the Interactive Analysis Model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of four recurring stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing [19]. During data collection, data were gathered from various sources, including interviews, observations, and documents. In the condensation stage, data were selected, simplified, and coded according to themes such as participation forms, implementation of application use, and inhibiting factors. Data display was presented in narrative and relational patterns among categories to help the researcher understand the phenomenon comprehensively. Conclusion drawing was done after the data were considered consistent, strong, and able to answer the research questions.

To ensure data validity, this study conducted verification using triangulation techniques, member checking, audit trail, and reflexivity, an approach widely recommended in qualitative research to strengthen data credibility [20]. Triangulation was performed by cross-checking interview data with documentation and observation results. Member checking involved returning summaries of interview findings to informants for confirmation. Audit trails recorded all decisions regarding coding, theme development, and interpretation. Reflexivity was maintained through a research journal documenting assumptions and reflections.

Ethical considerations were observed by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring anonymity in reporting, and securing formal permission from the Samboja District Office to conduct the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULT

Implementation of the SIMANTAP Application in Samboja District

a. Communication

The communication aspect plays an important role in the success of a public policy, including in the implementation of the SIMANTAP application in Samboja District. Based on the findings, communication was transmitted through direct socialization at the district and village levels, reaching approximately 85–95 percent. However, some employees were absent, resulting in uneven distribution of information. In terms of clarity, the information was delivered clearly, and the application was easy to understand thanks to its simple interface. However, discussions were only intensive during the early socialization stage and were rarely conducted regularly afterward. Consistency of communication also remains weak, as reminders were conveyed only occasionally in meetings, and there was no routine forum or scheduled discussion of the application.

Figure 1. Socialization and Guidance on Application Use at District and Village Levels

Overall, interview results indicate that the consistency of communication in SIMANTAP implementation still needs strengthening. Information delivered only occasionally prevents optimal internalization of policy, necessitating repeated communication through routine forums or periodic monitoring. This aligns with the principle that policy communication must be continuous to support successful implementation [16].

b. Resources

Resources are a key determinant of the implementation of a technology-based policy. In terms of human resources, staff in Samboja District implement the policy, and policy failures often occur due to limited staff with appropriate competencies [7]. During the initial socialization, training was provided to all employees, including operators of each village. Most employees demonstrated good understanding and skills in using the SIMANTAP application, as confirmed by the village operators.

The condition of human resources in SIMANTAP implementation shows adequate readiness at the operator level. However, in terms of technological resources, supporting facilities such as computers and internet networks remain a major concern. Adequate hardware availability and a stable internet connection are essential for optimal application operation, a problem commonly found in digital government implementation [13]. Operators reported that system errors caused by unstable networks were usually resolved by contacting IT personnel or consulting the district operator.

From a financial resources perspective, no specific budget has been allocated to SIMANTAP. Both the Head of Samboja District and the Head of General Administration stated that budget constraints remain a major issue. The absence of formal funding indicates that SIMANTAP operates without structural financial support, which threatens long-term sustainability unless supported by regional budget allocation.

c. Disposition

The disposition or attitude of implementers strongly influences policy success. The findings show that most personnel have a positive disposition toward the implementation of SIMANTAP. They believe the application helps speed up services, reduce paper usage, and simplify document filing. The District Head stated that employees responded well to the policy and consistently used the application.

However, a small number of employees still preferred manual submission due to unfamiliarity or doubt about the online system. Some felt that physical documents were easier to track and perceived as more secure. Concerns regarding technical errors or potential data loss contributed to hesitation. Despite this, overall disposition remains positive, particularly among operators who directly experience the benefits of digitalization. Positive disposition is essential because implementer attitudes significantly shape policy outcomes [21].

d. Bureaucratic Structure

From a bureaucratic standpoint, Samboja District has established clear role distribution for managing SIMANTAP. Specific officers were appointed as operators at both district and village levels to assist with data input and validation. A structured workflow was prepared as a guideline to regulate administrative procedures.

Interviews indicate that the workflow is easy to understand and that responsibilities for document input, verification, and validation have been clearly assigned. The bureaucratic structure with a clear hierarchy and standard operating procedures contributes to better

implementation, consistent with the view that structured bureaucracy enhances administrative performance [17].

Figure 2. SIMANTAP Application Workflow

Inhibiting Factors in SIMANTAP Implementation

Findings indicate four main inhibiting factors: limited computer facilities and internet connectivity, the absence of a dedicated budget, an entrenched manual work culture, and weak evaluation and monitoring systems.

First, several computers used were outdated, while some villages experienced unstable internet connectivity, causing delays in real-time processing. Second, the absence of a dedicated budget means operational expenses are funded from general funds, limiting the development and maintenance of the application.

Third, manual work culture remains strong, particularly among older employees who are more comfortable with physical documents, a common challenge in digital transformation initiatives [9]. Fourth, monitoring is mostly incidental and not routinely structured, making it difficult to track progress or address recurring issues. Weak evaluation systems often hinder policy implementation due to a lack of continuous feedback and supervision [8].

3.2 Discussion

Communication plays an important role in ensuring that all employees understand the application's function, how it works, and the benefits it provides. Field findings show that communication in SIMANTAP implementation has been relatively good in terms of transmission and clarity, but weak in consistency. Although the initial socialization reached most employees, communication did not continue regularly afterward. This inconsistency in communication → incomplete internalization of the policy among implementers → low routine usage and limited habit formation in application use, consistent with research

showing that sustained outreach is critical for continued adoption of e-government services [22].

Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services requires clarity of procedures so that service implementers understand the service flow. Therefore, even though SIMANTAP is technically clear, continuous communication must be strengthened to maintain service standards. This also reflects Edward III's view that communication must fulfill the requirements of transmission, clarity, and consistency to support effective policy execution [16]. Specifically, weak communication consistency in SIMANTAP has contributed to procedural misunderstandings during follow-up stages, limiting uptake after initial training, a pattern also noted in studies on digital public service communication strategies [23].

The lack of routine reinforcement has resulted in inconsistent application use. While initial understanding is strong, the absence of structured communication mechanisms reduces long-term optimization. Thus, communication in SIMANTAP implementation can be considered effective in clarity but insufficient in consistency. To remediate this, practical mechanisms such as monthly refresher sessions, a dedicated WhatsApp/Telegram helpdesk, quarterly evaluation meetings, and a KPI dashboard tracking digital vs. manual submissions could strengthen ongoing engagement and routine use [22].

In SIMANTAP implementation, human, technological, and financial resources play an important role. Training was provided in all ten villages, and employees showed good adaptation. However, technological constraints such as outdated computers and unstable internet pose direct challenges, placing infrastructure limitations in the "high impact/high cost" category, as robust infrastructure is widely identified as central to e-government effectiveness [5], [24].

Financial resource limitations remain the most pressing issue, as no dedicated budget exists for system maintenance or upgrades. This results in reliance on internal initiative and improvisation, which risks stagnation when technical issues arise. Financial constraints also weaken opportunities to integrate SIMANTAP into the district's broader SPBE architecture and performance reporting, an alignment recommended in national e-government frameworks to ensure sustainability and interoperability [25]. A structured financial allocation is needed to ensure sustainability.

The disposition of civil servants in Samboja is generally positive. Operators and employees welcomed SIMANTAP because it helps them complete administrative tasks more efficiently. Their willingness to learn and adapt strengthens policy execution, supporting the argument that implementer disposition is a core determinant of implementation success and a key enabler of adoption when other barriers are minimized [15].

The bureaucratic structure in Samboja District is clear, with established SOPs guiding the workflow from submission to document issuance. Coordination between district and village operators runs effectively. Structured procedures and clear role distribution make the bureaucracy better able to manage digital innovation, but without periodic performance monitoring and feedback loops (e.g., monthly digital usage reports), even clear structures may not prevent a drift back to manual processes [25].

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the study's results, the implementation of the Rapid Introductory Letter Administration Service System (SIMANTAP) in Samboja District shows that digital innovation in personnel administration is being adopted and understood by most employees. The application has simplified several administrative processes, increased service speed, and improved document management accuracy. Positive attitudes from administrators, adequate operator readiness, and the availability of clear workflows indicate that the internal environment is generally supportive of SIMANTAP implementation. However, the achievements have not yet reached optimal levels because implementation is still hindered by inconsistent communication, limited technological infrastructure, and the absence of a structured budget specifically allocated to the system.

Limitations of this study include its focus on a single district, a relatively small informant set, reliance on self-reported data, and limited longitudinal observation of system usage. These constraints suggest that the findings may not be fully generalizable and that longer-term usage patterns and adoption trends may not have been captured. Future work should include replication of this study across multiple districts with larger informant samples and a follow-up study after technological infrastructure and budget improvements to assess the impact on adoption and service performance.

To enhance SIMANTAP implementation, several operational measures are recommended. Regular communication can be strengthened through monthly refresher programs and a dedicated WhatsApp/Telegram helpdesk managed by the Personnel Subdivision to provide ongoing updates and user support. Technological infrastructure should be improved by replacing outdated PCs in all ten villages and upgrading internet connectivity, coordinated by the IT unit. A dedicated APBD line item for SIMANTAP system maintenance and future upgrades should be established during the next fiscal planning cycle. Human resource capacity can be enhanced through quarterly training sessions for operators and staff on advanced system features and troubleshooting, led by the Personnel Subdivision and IT unit. Evaluation and monitoring should include quarterly review meetings to assess system usage statistics, processing times, and adoption rates, with results reported to the District Head for decision-making. Finally, SIMANTAP should be integrated with district-level SPBE architecture to ensure interoperability and compliance with national e-government standards. With these measures, SIMANTAP has the potential to become an effective, sustainable, and fully integrated digital administrative service model supporting modern bureaucratic governance at the district level.

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