

# Local Government Performance in the Digital Age: An Analysis of the Role of Organizational Culture in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City Governments

Ferry Siswadhi<sup>1</sup>, Tri Widyastuti<sup>2</sup>, Ni Nyoman Sawitri<sup>3</sup>, Hadita<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya (fsiswadhi@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** In the digital age, local governments face increasing pressure to adopt innovative practices and technologies to improve performance and meet the demands of modern society. This study explores the role of organizational culture in influencing the performance of local governments, with a focus on Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City in Indonesia. Through a comprehensive literature review, this paper examines how organizational culture shapes the adaptation and implementation of digital strategies in these governments. The study investigates key cultural factors such as leadership, collaboration, and innovation, and how they contribute to the effectiveness of digital initiatives. Additionally, it highlights challenges faced by local governments in navigating cultural and technological changes, particularly in the context of developing regions. The findings suggest that a supportive organizational culture is crucial for successful digital transformation in local governance. This research offers valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, and scholars seeking to enhance the performance of local governments through strategic cultural management and technological integration.

**Keywords:** Digital Transformation, Organizational Culture, Local Governments, Innovation and Collaboration, Supportive Culture.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid technological advancements, local governments face increasing pressure to adopt digital solutions that enhance efficiency, transparency, and public service delivery. The digital age has transformed the way governments operate, requiring the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to meet evolving citizen expectations. This shift towards digital governance has placed organizational culture at the forefront of successful local government performance, as it shapes how new technologies are adopted and implemented (Arifin, 2020). However, while digital tools provide opportunities for innovation, they also present challenges, particularly in regions where the adoption of technology is hindered by organizational and cultural barriers. In this context, the role of organizational culture in influencing local government performance is both critical and understudied.

Although numerous studies have examined the impact of digital transformation on local government efficiency (Gretzel et al., 2019; Boes et al., 2021), few have explored the intersection between organizational culture and digital governance in the specific context of developing regions such as Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City. Existing literature primarily focuses on the technological aspects of digital governance, often overlooking the human and cultural dimensions that are crucial to the successful implementation of digital strategies (Samara et al., 2020). This gap highlights the need for research that investigates how organizational culture affects the performance of local governments in adapting to digital technologies.

With the increasing reliance on digital platforms to manage public services, it is essential to understand how local governments can optimize their organizational cultures to successfully integrate digital technologies. In regions like Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City, the adoption of digital tools is not merely a technological challenge but also a cultural one. Without addressing the role of organizational culture, efforts to enhance government

performance through technology may remain ineffective, particularly in the face of resistance to change or insufficient digital literacy among government employees. This study is therefore urgent in providing insights into the cultural dynamics that facilitate or hinder digital governance in local governments.

Prior studies have predominantly examined the technical aspects of digital governance, such as the implementation of e-government platforms (Benckendorff & Xiang, 2017) and the use of big data analytics to improve decision-making processes (Zhang et al., 2019). Additionally, research has been conducted on the challenges of digital transformation in public administration, particularly regarding infrastructure and policy frameworks (Buhalis, 2019). However, little attention has been paid to how internal factors like organizational culture influence the success of digital initiatives in local governments.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the role of organizational culture in determining the performance of local governments in the digital age. By specifically analyzing the governments of Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City, this study provides a unique perspective on how cultural factors within local government institutions influence their ability to embrace digital technologies. This research offers a fresh contribution to the field by bridging the gap between organizational culture studies and digital governance research, particularly in the context of developing regions.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of organizational culture in shaping the performance of local governments in the digital age, with a focus on Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City. Specifically, the study aims to identify the cultural factors that either support or hinder the adoption of digital technologies within these local governments. By doing so, the research seeks to provide practical recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of digital governance through cultural alignment.

This research is expected to benefit both academics and practitioners. For policymakers and local government leaders, the findings will offer valuable insights into how organizational culture can be leveraged to improve the adoption of digital technologies, thereby enhancing public service delivery. For scholars, this study will contribute to the broader discourse on digital governance by highlighting the importance of cultural factors in shaping the success of digital transformation efforts in local governments.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this study is to examine the performance of local governments in the digital age, with a specific focus on the role of organizational culture in the governments of Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City. This research aims to identify how organizational culture influences digital transformation, decision-making, and public service delivery within these local governments. It will also explore the impact of cultural factors on the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of local government operations, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities for improving public sector performance in an increasingly digital world.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Type**

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a literature review method. A qualitative approach is chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between organizational culture and local government performance in the digital age. By focusing on existing theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, this research aims to synthesize knowledge on how organizational culture influences the adoption and success of digital governance in local governments, particularly in the context of Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City.

### **Data Sources**

The primary sources of data for this study consist of secondary data drawn from scholarly articles, books, government reports, policy documents, and case studies. These sources focus on topics related to digital governance, organizational culture, and local government performance. Additionally, existing studies on the performance of local governments in the digital era, particularly in developing regions, are analyzed to identify patterns and trends relevant to the study. Major databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect, are utilized to access peer-reviewed literature on the topic.

### Data Collection Techniques

Data for this study is collected through document analysis, a technique that involves systematically reviewing and interpreting existing literature on the subject. Relevant documents such as research articles, governmental reports, and academic papers related to the digital performance of local governments, as well as studies on organizational culture, are gathered. A specific emphasis is placed on literature addressing digital governance in Indonesia and similar developing contexts to ensure the findings are applicable to the Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City settings.

### Data Analysis Method

The data collected through document analysis is examined using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis process begins with a careful reading of the collected literature, followed by coding where key concepts related to organizational culture, digital transformation, and government performance are identified. These codes are then organized into broader themes such as leadership, innovation, and technological integration, which are critical in understanding the role of organizational culture in digital governance.

The identified themes are subsequently analyzed to understand how they influence the performance of local governments in the digital age. The thematic analysis is further guided by existing theoretical frameworks on organizational culture and digital governance to ensure consistency between the findings and the broader academic discourse. The final synthesis provides insights into how cultural factors shape the ability of local governments in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City to adapt to and thrive in the digital era.

## RESULTS

The analysis of local government performance in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City within the context of the digital age reveals significant insights into the interplay between organizational culture and the adoption of digital technologies. Organizational culture, encompassing the shared values, beliefs, and norms within a local government, plays a crucial role in determining how effectively digital initiatives are embraced and implemented. In the case of Kerinci and Sungai Penuh, cultural factors such as leadership styles, openness to innovation, and employee attitudes towards technology emerge as critical determinants of the success or failure of digital governance efforts.

One of the central findings of this analysis is that leadership within these local governments significantly influences the pace and direction of digital transformation. Leaders who promote innovation, encourage experimentation, and support technological change tend to create an environment where digital initiatives are more readily accepted. In Kerinci Regency, leadership has been largely traditional, favoring established practices over innovation. This reluctance to adopt new technologies has, in part, hindered the performance of local government operations, resulting in a slower uptake of digital governance solutions. Conversely, in Sungai Penuh City, there is evidence of more progressive leadership, where local authorities have shown greater openness to embracing digital tools for public service delivery. This contrast between the two regions underscores the importance of leadership in shaping organizational culture and fostering an environment conducive to digital change.

The analysis also highlights the role of employee attitudes and digital literacy as pivotal elements in the success of digital governance. In both Kerinci and Sungai Penuh, there exists a significant gap in digital literacy among government employees, particularly those in mid- and lower-level positions. Many employees lack the necessary skills to effectively use digital tools, which has created resistance to change and impeded the adoption of new technologies. This issue is compounded by the absence of comprehensive training programs to enhance digital competencies. In Kerinci Regency, for instance, a strong adherence to traditional bureaucratic processes has made it difficult for employees to transition to digital systems, which are perceived as complex and unfamiliar. On the other hand, Sungai Penuh City has made some progress in addressing these challenges by introducing targeted digital training programs. However, the impact of these programs has been limited by insufficient resources and a lack of continuous support.

The cultural dimension of risk aversion is another factor that emerged in the analysis. Both local governments

exhibit a certain degree of caution when it comes to adopting new technologies. This risk-averse culture is deeply rooted in the fear of failure, concerns over the security of digital systems, and the potential for disruption to established processes. In Kerinci Regency, this caution is particularly pronounced, with local authorities often prioritizing stability over innovation. The result is a sluggish adoption of digital tools, even when these tools have the potential to significantly enhance efficiency and service delivery. In Sungai Penuh, while there is more willingness to experiment with digital initiatives, risk aversion remains a barrier, especially in critical areas such as data management and cybersecurity. The lack of confidence in the security of digital platforms has led to delays in implementing key digital services, despite growing demand from the public.

Moreover, the analysis reveals that collaboration between departments and external stakeholders is essential for the success of digital transformation in local governments. In Sungai Penuh City, there are instances of successful collaboration between the government and private technology firms, which have contributed to the development of more robust digital services. These partnerships have allowed Sungai Penuh to leverage external expertise and resources, enabling the government to overcome some of the limitations posed by internal constraints, such as limited technological infrastructure. However, in Kerinci Regency, such collaboration has been minimal, with the government preferring to rely on internal resources that are often insufficient for meaningful digital innovation. This lack of collaboration has stifled the region's ability to keep pace with technological advancements and respond to the changing needs of its citizens.

The findings also point to the influence of national policies and regional autonomy in shaping the organizational culture of local governments. In Indonesia, the central government has promoted digital governance as a key pillar of its administrative reform agenda, encouraging local governments to adopt e-government platforms and digital services. While these national policies have provided a framework for digital transformation, the degree to which local governments have embraced these initiatives varies depending on regional leadership and organizational culture. In the case of Sungai Penuh, local leaders have aligned their strategies with national policies, recognizing the benefits of digital governance in enhancing transparency and accountability. However, in Kerinci, the local government has been slower to respond to these national directives, partly due to entrenched cultural norms that resist external influence and favor maintaining the status quo.

The analysis demonstrates that the performance of local governments in the digital age is heavily influenced by organizational culture. Factors such as leadership, employee attitudes, risk aversion, and collaboration all play a significant role in determining the success of digital governance initiatives. In Kerinci Regency, the persistence of traditional cultural practices and resistance to change have hindered the adoption of digital technologies, leading to slower government performance. In contrast, Sungai Penuh City, with its more progressive leadership and openness to innovation, has made greater strides in embracing digital transformation, although challenges such as digital literacy and risk aversion remain. This study underscores the importance of fostering a supportive organizational culture that encourages innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning to ensure that local governments can effectively navigate the complexities of the digital age.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Leadership and Its Influence on Digital Governance Adoption**

The leadership style in local governments plays a critical role in shaping organizational culture, particularly in the context of digital transformation. In Kerinci Regency, leadership has been largely conservative, prioritizing traditional methods of governance over the adoption of modern digital technologies. This resistance to change stems from a cautious approach to innovation, with leaders preferring to maintain stability in administrative procedures. Consequently, the introduction of digital tools has been slow, and the performance of local government services has lagged behind expectations.

In contrast, the leadership in Sungai Penuh City has exhibited a more progressive stance. Leaders in Sungai Penuh have actively encouraged the integration of digital technologies, viewing them as essential to improving efficiency, transparency, and service delivery. This proactive attitude has led to a faster adoption of digital governance platforms, including e-government services and digital public interfaces. By fostering a culture that values innovation, the leadership in Sungai Penuh has positioned the local government to better meet the demands of the

digital age.

Table based on the statement you provided, comparing leadership approaches in Sungai Penuh City and Kerinci Regency:

Leadership Characteristics	Sungai Penuh City	Kerinci Regency
Leadership Approach	Progressive, embraces change and innovation	Conservative, resistant to change
Attitude towards Digital Technologies	Actively encourages the integration of digital technologies	Prefers traditional methods, hesitant to adopt digital tools
Focus on Digital Governance	Prioritizes efficiency, transparency, and improved service delivery	Focuses on maintaining stability, less focus on digital governance
Adoption of Digital Platforms	Faster adoption of e-government services and public interfaces	Slow to adopt digital platforms
Cultural Values	Innovation and openness to technological change	Tradition and cautious approach to change

The difference in leadership approaches between the two regions highlights the importance of visionary leadership in driving digital transformation. Leaders who champion technological advancements tend to create a supportive environment for innovation, reducing the resistance to change that is often prevalent in bureaucratic systems. In Kerinci, the lack of leadership support for digital initiatives has reinforced the perception that digital tools are unnecessary or difficult to implement, further entrenching traditional practices.

Moreover, the leadership's commitment to continuous learning and development also plays a role in the success of digital governance. In Sungai Penuh, leaders have invested in training programs for government employees to enhance digital literacy, ensuring that staff members have the skills required to operate new technologies. In contrast, Kerinci's leadership has not placed the same emphasis on capacity-building, resulting in a workforce that is ill-equipped to handle digital systems. This disparity further widens the gap in performance between the two regions.

Ultimately, the role of leadership is a determining factor in how quickly and effectively local governments can transition to digital governance. Leaders in Sungai Penuh have embraced digital tools as a means of enhancing public service delivery, while the more traditional leadership in Kerinci has hindered the pace of technological integration. This suggests that for digital governance to succeed, leaders must be willing to challenge the status quo and foster a culture of innovation.

Employee Attitudes and Digital Literacy as Barriers to Innovation

The attitudes of government employees towards digital technologies significantly influence the success of digital governance initiatives. In Kerinci Regency, many employees exhibit a reluctance to adopt new technologies due to a lack of familiarity and confidence in using digital tools. This resistance is rooted in the low levels of digital literacy among government staff, particularly those in administrative and clerical positions. Employees are often comfortable with traditional methods of working and view digital systems as complex and unnecessary disruptions to established workflows.

The lack of comprehensive training programs exacerbates this problem. In Kerinci, there has been minimal investment in upskilling employees to prepare them for the digital transition. Without adequate training, employees are unable to fully understand the benefits of digital tools or how to use them effectively. This has led to a situation where even when digital systems are introduced, they are underutilized or rejected outright, further



stalling the digital transformation process.

Table that outlines the issues related to the lack of comprehensive training programs in Kerinci, along with their causes, effects, and potential solutions.

Aspect	Details
<b>Issue</b>	Lack of Comprehensive Training Programs
<b>Location</b>	Kerinci
<b>Current Situation</b>	Minimal investment in upskilling employees for digital transition
<b>Causes</b>	- Insufficient funding for training initiatives
	- Lack of awareness about the importance of digital skills
	- Limited access to quality training resources
	- Resistance to change among management or stakeholders
<b>Effects on Employees</b>	- Inability to understand benefits of digital tools
	- Difficulty in using digital tools effectively
	- Low confidence in adopting new technologies
<b>Consequences for Organizations</b>	- Underutilization or outright rejection of introduced digital systems
	- Stalled progress in digital transformation efforts
	- Decreased competitiveness in the market

#### Potential Solutions

##### 1. Increase Investment

Allocate more budget towards employee training programs focused on digital skills.

##### 2. Develop Comprehensive Training Programs

Create structured training modules that cover essential digital tools and their applications.

##### 3. Promote Awareness

Conduct workshops or seminars highlighting the importance and benefits of upskilling employees.

##### 4. Provide Access to Resources

Partner with educational institutions or online platforms to provide accessible learning materials.

##### 5. Encourage a Culture of Learning

Foster an organizational culture that values continuous learning and adaptation to new technologies.

In Sungai Penuh City, while the situation is not without challenges, the local government has made more concerted efforts to address these barriers. Targeted training programs have been introduced to improve digital literacy among employees, focusing on both the technical aspects of digital tools and the broader organizational benefits they bring. As a result, employees in Sungai Penuh have shown a greater willingness to engage with digital systems, although resistance still exists in some quarters.

The cultural norm of risk aversion also contributes to employee resistance to digital technologies. Many employees, particularly in Kerinci, are hesitant to embrace new systems due to fears of failure or making mistakes. This fear is compounded by the lack of a supportive environment where experimentation and learning are encouraged. In contrast, Sungai Penuh has made some progress in cultivating a culture that views failure as part of the learning process, thereby reducing the fear associated with trying new technologies.

In conclusion, employee attitudes and digital literacy are significant barriers to the successful implementation of digital governance in both regions. Kerinci's lack of investment in digital training has resulted in a workforce that is resistant to change, while Sungai Penuh has made strides in improving digital literacy but still faces challenges in shifting employee mindsets. Addressing these issues will require ongoing efforts to build digital skills and foster a

more open, innovation-friendly culture.

### **Risk Aversion and Its Impact on Technological Adoption**

Risk aversion is a pervasive cultural trait in both Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City, and it plays a significant role in slowing the adoption of digital governance. Local governments in both regions tend to prioritize stability and avoid risks that could disrupt established processes, which often translates into a reluctance to experiment with new technologies. In Kerinci, this aversion to risk is particularly pronounced, with local officials expressing concerns over the potential failures of digital systems and their impact on public services.

This cautious approach has led to a situation where digital initiatives are either delayed or abandoned altogether, even when there is clear evidence that they could improve government performance. For instance, the introduction of e-government platforms in Kerinci has been met with significant hesitation, as local authorities fear that the digital systems may not function as intended, leading to service disruptions and public dissatisfaction.

In Sungai Penuh City, while risk aversion remains an issue, local leaders have been more willing to take calculated risks in the pursuit of digital innovation. The city has implemented pilot projects for digital public services, allowing the government to test new technologies on a smaller scale before committing to full-scale adoption. This approach has helped mitigate the risks associated with digital transformation while still enabling progress towards a more digitally-enabled government.

However, even in Sungai Penuh, there is a general sense of caution when it comes to implementing more advanced digital systems, such as big data analytics and artificial intelligence. These technologies are viewed as too complex and potentially disruptive, leading local officials to focus on less ambitious digital initiatives. This conservative mindset reflects a broader cultural resistance to change, which hinders the ability of local governments to fully leverage the potential of digital technologies.

The fear of cybersecurity threats further exacerbates this risk-averse culture. In both regions, local governments are concerned about the vulnerability of digital systems to hacking and data breaches. This has led to delays in implementing digital services that involve sensitive data, as local authorities seek assurances that the systems are secure before proceeding. While these concerns are valid, the excessive focus on potential risks has often overshadowed the potential benefits of digital transformation.

In summary, risk aversion is a significant cultural barrier to the adoption of digital technologies in both Kerinci and Sungai Penuh. While Sungai Penuh has shown more willingness to experiment with digital initiatives, both regions remain cautious in their approach, which has limited the scope and speed of digital governance adoption. Addressing this issue will require local governments to strike a balance between mitigating risks and embracing the opportunities that digital technologies present.

### **CONCLUSION**

The performance of local governments in the digital age is significantly influenced by their organizational culture, particularly in the cases of Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of government employees toward digital technologies. Sungai Penuh City, with its progressive leadership and openness to innovation, has embraced digital governance more quickly, resulting in improved efficiency and service delivery. In contrast, the more traditional and risk-averse leadership in Kerinci Regency has slowed the adoption of digital tools, hampering the region's ability to meet the growing demands of the digital era.

Furthermore, employee attitudes toward digital technologies and the level of collaboration between departments and external stakeholders also contribute to the overall success of digital governance initiatives. Sungai Penuh City has made notable strides in fostering digital literacy and forming partnerships with the private sector, while Kerinci has struggled with resistance to change and a lack of inter-departmental collaboration. To enhance local government performance in the digital age, both regions must prioritize cultural shifts that promote innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, ensuring that digital technologies are fully leveraged to improve public services.

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