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Dwi Mardiana Susilawati

PhD Student (State and Local Government),
Universitas Airlangga Surabaya
4-6 Jl. Airlangga Str., Airlangga, Kec. Gubeng,
Kota SBY, Jawa Timur 60115, Indonesia
Government and Regional Autonomy Bureau
of the East Java Provincial Secretariat,
Surabaya, Indonesia
dwi.mardiana.susilawati-2018@pasca.unair.ac.id
ORCID ID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0257-8477>



Suryanto

PhD (Psychology), Professor,
Department of Psychology,
Faculty of Psychology,
Universitas Airlangga Surabaya
4-6 Jl. Airlangga Str., Airlangga, Kec. Gubeng, Kota
SBY, Jawa Timur 60115, Indonesia
suryanto@psikologi.unair.ac.id
ORCID ID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2448-7429>



Windijarto

PhD (Human Resources Management),
Associate Professor,
Department of Economy and Business,
Faculty of Economy and Business,
Universitas Airlangga Surabaya
4-6 Jl. Airlangga Str., Airlangga, Kec. Gubeng,
Kota SBY, Jawa Timur 60115, Indonesia
windijarto@feb.unair.ac.id
ORCID ID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0747-7325>

Transforming the digital leadership to improve public service performance in the COVID-19 outbreak

Abstract. The low HDI in Pandalungan is a government-focused development priority, especially in the healthcare sector. The attempts to break the COVID-19 chain must be made to improve the quality of government services in the region. In optimizing the activities, the sub-district leaders play a significant role. There is an appeal to the sub-district leaders to enforce social distance since there is no face-to-face meeting with the appliance assigned. The Camat (a sub-district head) needs to adjust to this situation, so the Camat uses new media to perform his tasks. The COVID-19 pandemic affects several aspects of life, including the style of leadership. Digital leadership has become a model of leadership that is successful during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The current study, based on those evaluations, is aimed at assessing the impact of digital leadership on the performance of public services by the sub-district chief Pandalungan. To meet the goal of the study, a qualitative approach is applied. It can be concluded that transformational leadership is oriented towards the organization's vision and goals, which are outlined in action.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Digital Leadership; Public Service Performance

JEL Classifications: J18; J45; I12

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Суілаваті Д. М.

аспірантка, Університет Аірлангґа, Сурабая, Індонезія
працівник секретаріату, Агентство з питань регіональної автономії Східної Яви

Сурянто

кандидат психологічних наук, професор, кафедра психології, факультет психології,
Університет Аірлангґа, Сурабая, Індонезія

Віндіарто

кандидат економічних наук, доцент, кафедра економіки та бізнесу, факультет економіки та бізнесу,
Університет Аірлангґа, Сурабая, Індонезія

Трансформація цифрового лідерства для покращення ефективності надання державних послуг під час спалаху пандемії COVID-19

Анотація. Низькі показники ІЛР у Пандалунгані є пріоритетом для вдосконалення й розвитку за участю уряду, особливо в секторі охорони здоров'я. Необхідно розірвати пандемічний ланцюг COVID-19 для покращення якості державних послуг у регіоні. В оптимізації діяльності керівники округів грають значну роль. Через необхідність дотримуватись соціальної дистанції, зростає необхідність використання нових медіа для виконання завдань. Пандемія COVID-19 впливає на кілька аспектів, включаючи стиль керівництва. Цифрове лідерство стало успішною моделлю лідерства за часів пандемії COVID-19. Нинішнє дослідження, яке ґрунтується на такому баченні, має на меті оцінити вплив цифрового лідерства на ефективність надання державних послуг керівника округу Пандалунган. Для досягнення цієї мети було використано якісний підхід. За результатами проведеного дослідження можна зробити висновок, що трансформаційне лідерство орієнтоване на досягнення цілей, які підкріплені конкретними діями.

Ключові слова: трансформаційне лідерство; цифрове лідерство; ефективність державних послуг.

Сусилавати Д. М.

аспірантка,

Університет Аирлангга, Сурабая, Індонезія

работник секретариата, Агентство по вопросам региональной автономии Восточной Явы

Сурянто

кандидат психологических наук, профессор, кафедра психологии, факультет психологии,

Университет Аирлангга Сурабая, Сурабая, Індонезія

Виндиарто

кандидат экономических наук, доцент, кафедра экономики и бизнеса, факультет экономики и бизнеса,

Университет Аирлангга Сурабая, Сурабая, Індонезія

Трансформація лідерства в цифрових технологіях для підвищення ефективності державних послуг у часі спалаху пандемії COVID-19

Анотація. Низькі показники ІЧР в Пандалунгані є пріоритетними для удосконалення й розвитку при активній участі уряду, особливо в сфері здоров'я. В нинішній час існує необхідність розірвати пандемічний ланцюг COVID-19 для того, щоб удосконалити якість наданих державних послуг у регіоні. В даному процесі головну роль повинні зіграти керівники округів. В зв'язі з необхідністю дотримуватись соціальної дистанції зростає потреба в використанні нових медіа для виконання завдань. Пандемія COVID-19 впливає на декілька життєво важливих аспектів, включаючи стиль керівництва. Цифрове лідерство стало успішною моделлю лідерства в період пандемії COVID-19. Дане дослідження, в основу якого покладено таке бачення, має на меті оцінити вплив цифрового лідерства на ефективність наданих державних послуг керівника округу Пандалунган. Для досягнення даної мети було використано якісний підхід. Виходячи з результатів проведеного дослідження, можна зробити висновок, що трансформаційне лідерство орієнтоване на досягнення цілей, підкріплених конкретними діями.

Ключевые слова: трансформационное лидерство; цифровое лидерство; эффективность государственных услуг.

1. Introduction

The Pandalungan cultural area (Pasuruan, Probolinggo, Situbondo, Bondowoso, Jember, Lumajang, and Banyuwangi) is one of the regional development programs' key priorities on the basis of the East Java Regional Medium-Term Development Plan for 2019-2024 as development is not as rapid as the others. The majority of the Pandalungan region regions had an HDI of 71.39 and an East Java average of 70.77, below the national average. Lumajang Regency was located at 64.83, the Regency was 65.96, the Regency of Bondowoso was 65.27, the Regency of Situbondo at 66.41, the Regency of Probolinggo was at 64.85, and the Regency of Banyuwangi was at 70.06. Due to these conditions, efforts need to be made to enhance people's quality public services in the Pandalungan region, covering three fundamental services: the extension of health facilities, the expansion of educational opportunities, and employment opportunities.

The key focus of the government's attention is currently on the health sector. The pandemic in the region Pandalungan, made up of the Pasuruan Regency, the Probolinggo Regency, Bondowoso Regency, the Jember Regency, the Lumajang Regency, and the Banyuwangi Regency, including the red zone, is rising. This is due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The map below for COVID-19 shows that there are 227 positive COVID-19 cases in the Pasuruan Regency, 124 in Probolinggo Regency, 86 in Situbondo Regency, 21 in Bondowoso Regency, 92 in Jember Regency, 50 in Lumajang Regency, and 23 in the Banyuwangi Regency (East Java Provincial Health Office, 2020).

The preliminary analysis indicates that problems existed in the Pandalungan area include 1) The low quality of safe and clean living within the community; 2) Isolating rooms are still less representative in villages and quarters and 3) Equipment and services such as hand-washers, masks, and disinfectant spraying are not yet available to people in households. The high transmission capacity, especially for vulnerable groups, namely the elderly and people with co-morbidity, characterizes another health issue. Due to hygienic living habits and the practice of fitness management and nutrition, the potential for transmission is also high. Another concern is the inadequate number of health providers, shown by the shortage of healthcare workers; small facilities and infrastructure; lack of personal security (PPE), medications, and a referral system; poor surveillance of public health; as well as lack of service for people who suffer from non-COVID-19 (Kemendagri, 2020).

There are issues in the social field, namely: 1) Public knowledge is lacking in the physical distance; 2) The village cannot completely help the BLT beneficiaries that led to social friction; 3) Dependence of the society on government social assistance; and 4) There was no optimal utilization of voluntary posts available in villages and sub-districts (kelurahan). Social unrest; the conflict between citizens over social assistance; restrictions on movement, particularly with respect to religious worship and belief; and persons not used to a safe, healthy lifestyle; other social problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; (Kemendagri, 2020). In the technology era, the problems should embed into social media (Kopish & Marques, 2020; Rustan, 2020). It seems the problems center on the diversity that needs government intervention in sustainable planning (Lee & Lee, 2020; Tadeu et al., 2019; Tarman, 2020).

Other labor problems: 1) increased unemployment due to the closing of many MSMEs and 2) services not provided by skills and expertise. Then there are problems in the economic sector, including 1) declines in the earnings of MSME employees because of reduced sales and purchasing and 2) non-disposition of food storage in villages and sub-districts. In addition to residents categorized as poor and vulnerable under the Integrated Database (BDT), the economic impact caused by COVID-19 on homes is defined by the decline in the income of a certain community, also loss of income from layoffs (PHKs), decay in purchasing power of citizens and emergence of new, poor groups which are unable to meet basic necessities and (DTKS). Meanwhile, MSME players have had a decline in revenue, choked raw material markets, and a drop in market share, amongst other things. Food production and retail operations for staple commodities have also been limited with regard to farming and animal husbandry (Kemendagri, 2020).

The government represents the community in essence. Public services can be understood by the defined basic rules and procedures as an offering (services) to citizens with interest in the organization. The Government's difficulty to manage COVID-19 in the Pandalungan region lies with the population as customers with a mix of Javanese and Maduree cultures with different backgrounds and behaviors (Bekele & Ago, 2020; Novikov, 2020; Sutarto & Sodikan, 2008; Tarman, 2020). In the horseshoe region, geographical context affects the character of the two tribes. Typology Madurese tend to be harsh (high temperament), open, very strong, and hard-working. Typology, On the other hand, the Javanese are usually more patient, thriving, and careful (Yuswadi, 2008). Pandalungan's diversity in the region requires that public service providers be more vulnerable to the local community's context and actions, particularly in the area of COVID-19 management at the sub-district level (Hamzah, 2020).

In the course of this pandemic, the Sub-District Heads are required to perform their tasks, in particular, with respect to the distribution of assistance to the village communities and the development of tough villages at RT subdistrict level for the breaking off of the COVID-19 transmission chain. Preparation and resilience are very necessary to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, especially at the community-based levels, namely sub-districts and villages.

To date, the Home Ministry and the Village Minister have issued basic guidance on the role of subdistricts in dealing with the COVID-19 village pandemic: 1) Receive, in conjunction with a Budget Plan (RAB); 2) a recapitulation report on the creation of COVID-19 counting conditions and activities in each town. Implement guidance and control through the Village Regional Budget for the implementation of COVID-19 responses; 3) Participated in accelerating the Village RKP change through a special Village Planning Conference in preparation for activity modifications focusing on the work related to the basic social needs of the communities affected, in particular, those of the villages which did not budge in village APB for emergency and disaster management; 4) Changes to the village budget with the associated OPDs are also taken into account in helping to adjust the Village RKP; 5) Receive from the Regent/Mayor delegated evaluations of the Draft APBDesa Village Law.

In addition to the five roles previously mentioned, the district could be more strategic to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic because the district is one of the most community-oriented district/city apparatuses and plays an important role in promoting and overseeing villages, particularly in situations of emergency and urgent management issues. Subdistricts often offer their tools to work areas and sub-districts, as urban villages frequently constitute the first point of entry for the spread of the pandemic in COVID-19. Therefore, the sub-district position is very critical to overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on health, economic, and social challenges (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020).

It is required to take part in efforts to break the 19-covet chain, namely the search for residents with a high risk of COVID-19 in several ways: 1) The Village government is also responsible, particularly those directly linked to village residents (RT/RW). Enabling Whatsapp groups to track the situation with citizens; 2) Informing COVID-19; 3) about the right moves. Identify, provide information, and track residents and foster cooperation between residents and support affected people; 4) Report to the nearest medical facility or health center. If there are villagers who experience COVID-19 symptoms, the RT/RW will call them on the status of residents who have COVID-19 symptoms, ask for 14 days for isolation. The RT/RW must also inform residents so that ODP, PDP, or supportive corona patients, including the nearest people or relatives, do not suffer bad stigma (Diskominfo Jatim, 2020). The Camat (sub-district head) is instrumental in optimizing these tasks, so Camat always has a successful style of leadership.

In the sense of HRM, someone responsible for the quality of human resources requires management leadership skills. In other words, leadership and managers are required as an organization unit. Management involvement is necessary but not appropriate in this case in the implementation of the HRM. This needs an aspect of human resources management, called leadership (Romlah et al., 2020; Hijriah, 2016). Leadership is a leader's ability to control the person or his followers. So, the other person is behaving like the leader wishes. Leadership is often distinguished as a social mechanism and a leadership. Leadership as a role is a whole of the rights and duties that an individual or organization may have. Leadership as a social process encompasses all the behaviors of an individual or organization that trigger citizens' movement. This has been mentioned by Abubakar (2013). Leadership is any action taken, according to Danim (2004) & Apriani (2009), to organize and direct other individuals and groups that are part of a given container to reach previously implemented goals.

Wirawan (2010) says no other position has received so much attention in the company as a leader. The leader's position is important to develop priorities, allocate limited resources, concentrate on company objectives, organize changes that take place, promote interpersonal communication with followers, and set the right course or best if a failure occurs. Many have requested more agile leadership because of the pace at which organizations today are evolving. According to Sahertian (2008), an adaptive manager would be able to function more efficiently in a world that constantly changes by recognizing and reacting properly to leaders' challenges and development. Adaptive leaders will collaborate with their supporters to find innovative solutions to difficult challenges and at the same time to take on a broader spectrum of leadership responsibilities.

Digital leadership is a result of transformational leadership in the Pandalungan region chief. A leader who can communicate well with his employees/subordinates and who knows the job to create maximum services is among the factors that play an important role in creating maximums. A guide understands his subordinates' psychology. In particular, leaders prioritize education to produce better leaders and their subordinates who have an effect on optimizing good service (Van Kessel, 2020; Alam, 2017). In order for the sub-district to enhance the level of public service during the COVID-19 pandemic, it needs that the sub-district follows the required leadership style to provide the community with effective service for the Camat and its subordinates.

The definition for public service is based on the Decree No. 81 of 1993, subsequently refined by Decree No. 63 of 2003 of the Ministry of Administrative Reform: all types of services are performed by the national, regional, and regional government agencies or the governmental companies in terms of goods and services;

Results in the sub-district assess public service quality. Performance is a general concept used in or based on productivity, obligations, or managerial accountabilities in part or all of an organization's operations over a period of time concerning many standards such as the past or expected costs (Kirom, 2015; Yola & Budianto, 2016).

Given a pandemic scenario, the Digital Leadership Implications of transformational leadership should therefore be used for all societies in the country, including public regions Pandalungan.

This research would investigate how the leadership of Pandalungan, a subdistrict head, affects the improvement of public services. Based on these evaluations.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of research is descriptive. The researcher tries to describe the effect of digital leadership as the implication of transformational leadership applied by the sub-district head in improving public services' performance (sub-districts) in the area of Pandalungan East Java province. The technique of collecting data in this journal is through literature study from news online, previous journals, and books related to research problems.

3. Results

The leadership of the sub-district head in the area Pandalungan is very important in optimizing the assignments to apparatus at the sub-district, village, and village levels. Therefore, Camat needs to adopt an effective leadership style. Transformational leadership is a leadership style adopted by the head of the area Pandalungan, where these leaders transform their followers by increasing their awareness of the importance of organizational results, thereby activating their high-level needs and encouraging them to go beyond their interests for the organization although such leadership was originally expected to be different from, and more effective than, reward or transaction-based leadership, empirical findings consistently suggest that successful leaders enhance the use of transactional behaviors that are beneficial to those that are more transformational (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Stevens, 2011; Elkins, 2003).

As stated by Bass (1985), transformational leadership is a person's process of transforming his/her values into followers to support the organization's vision and goals. According to Bass, transformational leadership is the influence of leaders on subordinates. Subordinates feel their trust, pride, loyalty, and respect for their superiors, and they are motivated to do more than what is expected. Transformational leadership must be able to clearly define the vision for the organization so that followers accept the leader's credibility. Furthermore, Burns (1978) admits transformational leadership can be seen when leaders and followers agree with each other to improve morale and motivation through the power of their vision and personality; transformational leaders can inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivation to work towards goals together.

Transformational leadership can have a positive and significant impact on worker change during the COVID-19 pandemic. In leadership practice, there is an exemplary dimension that can influence dominantly. The briefing and meeting sessions held by the leadership can raise awareness and a strong belief in workers that the COVID-19 pandemic can end soon and the situation can return to normal. Also, the motivation provided by transformational leaders can provide confidence that post-pandemic, companies can improve performance because they can see new opportunities in the future (Kamar et al., 2020; McCorkle, 2020; Tarman, 2017).

To adjust to the conditions during this pandemic, the sub-district heads in the area Pandalungan are implementing digital leadership as an implication of transformational leadership. Digital leadership as a form of leadership theory development has also been tested for its effectiveness under these conditions and this is evidenced by the presence of organizational leaders who are part of this research which reveals the challenges and opportunities of leadership during a period of massive social restrictions and regional quarantine determined by the Indonesian government so that very dependent on information technology (Lehman & Welch, 2020; Mustajab, et al., 2020).

Sandel (2013) defines digital leadership as an ability and capacity that can provide an environment of creativity by optimizing digital technology and capabilities. Digital characteristics are a leader of creativity, a leader who inspires, a leader of credibility, a leader of broader knowledge, a collaborative and interactive leader, and trusts in his subordinates. According to Burke, the roles that must play digital leadership are:

- a) Visionary: having the ability to see the big picture and translate it to members of the organization;
- b) Convener: can manage differences in members and bring the organization towards clear objectives and problem-solving;
- c) Team Sponsor: can form and direct real working groups and virtual groups;
- d) Managers: have the ability to source and allocate organizational resources responsibly, and the ability to manage real and virtual organizations;
- e) Innovators: have the ability to find new ways of doing jobs outside their main duties and functions;

f) Mentor: can guide and direct prospective new leaders within the organization.

The leadership style adopted by the sub-district heads in the area Pandalungan has played a major role in optimizing public services' performance, in this case regarding the handling of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital leadership is referred to as a process of social influence mediated by information and communication technology to produce changes in behavior and performance with individuals and groups in an organization (Chua & Chua, 2017; Tarman, 2016). Digital leadership is designed to produce changes in performance, thinking, feelings, behavior, and/or attitudes for recipients (such as groups, individuals, or the entire organization's time) to guide in achieving common goals (Avolio et al., 2014). Digital leadership involves enhancing the relationships of organizational members in such a way as to allow work to be mediated using technology. This means that communication, information gathering, and information dissemination occur through information technology instead of traditional leadership, which focuses on face-to-face interactions. Using technology, leaders can lead from a distance, and interactions are carried out only through technological means (Kalimullina et al., 2020; Li et al., 2016).

There is a policy social distancing that officials make the Camat need to adjust in giving assignments to the district. The assignment of tasks which are usually given and explained directly makes it easier for the Camat to monitor the work of his subordinates. However, now the Camat is required to convey tasks to his subordinates through communication online. Communication is carried out via computer and internet media. It would be easier if Camat can apply the digital leadership style (digital leadership) well. For that, apart from having communication skills, the Camat must also have skills in the use of information technology. As (Subedi & Subedi, 2020; Mustajab et al., 2020), the leadership of the organization has completely transformed into digital leadership and is very dependent on information technology, so that organizational control currently depends heavily on information technology skills (Kilinc et al., 2018; Mustajab et al., 2020; Subedi & Subedi, 2020; Tarman et al., 2019).

4. Discussion

From the description of the results of previous research, the head of the area Pandalungan applies digital leadership as an implementation of transformational leadership. Camat with transformational leadership can equate future visions with their subordinates and increase subordinates' needs to a higher level than what they need. Transformational leaders must be able to persuade their subordinates to carry out their duties beyond their interests in the interests of the larger organization. Transformational leaders will also try to articulate a realistic future vision of the organization, intellectually stimulate subordinates, and pay attention to the differences that are owned by subordinate. In this context, the Camat implies transformational leadership through digital leadership. He needs his subordinates to complete the job, but the existence of a social distancing sub-district head makes the sub-district head and his subordinates work by utilizing technology. In this condition, assigning tasks to subordinates is not done directly but through communication online. The Camat must be able to coordinate well with his subordinates to achieve organizational goals. Coordination is carried out through good communication between the Camat and his subordinates. Communication skills are a challenge for digital leadership, where they need to communicate more intensively through the mediation of information technology. Of course, it is different from communication when in normal conditions. They must improve their communication skills independently (Mustajab et al., 2020). Through the application of digital leadership, the sub-district head motivates his subordinates to achieve organizational goals by optimally utilizing technology. In this case, the objective of the sub-district organization is related to an increase in public service performance.

Digital leadership can improve public services' performance as the research results of Wolor et al. (2020), which states that digital leadership has a significant effect on performance. Digital leadership is a combination of the context of leadership and technology that contributes to and optimizes performance (Avolio et al., 2014 & Ristiana et al., 2020). Hema & Gupta (2015) the present research was conducted to study the AQ of 11th standard, English medium school students in Gandhinagar city, Gujarat with reference to various variables. The study was conducted on a sample of 461 boys and girls of 11th standard school students from Gujarat State Board of Education (GSEB add that digital leadership is a new paradigm that provides various new opportunities, namely the ability to communicate directly one-on-one with employees and customers using technology to improve performance. Digital leadership adapts and integrates virtuality to ensure its employees' success and performance (Darics, 2020; Fernandez & Jawadi, 2015). There

is a high need for digital leadership in project management performance based on technological change and improvement. Electronic leadership supports time and cost management, while electronic leaders need relevant knowledge and skills through training and seminars to fulfill effective project management.

Besides, more investment is needed for applications of digital leadership effective in project management performance (PMP). Also, clear goals and visions for digital leadership are needed because they increase motivation, a sense of belonging, and trust. Finally, digital leadership acts as the basis for project planning, decision making, and the effective use of technology in public institutions (Mkinga, 2018).

Digital leadership is an important trend for rapid advances in technology and its applications during a pandemic and presents challenges for companies to adopt technology, namely to benefit from its advantages (Liu et al., 2020). In virtual or remote work environments, leaders must demonstrate a more inclusive leadership style (Schwarz Müller et al., 2018). For leaders digital, social skills, such as characteristics of effective face-to-face communication, may not be sufficient to lead in a virtualized environment (Huda, 2018; Rahmadi et al., 2020; Roman et al., 2019). Cortellazzo et al., (2019) highlighted that digital leaders should develop communication where employees feel free to present their ideas, participate in the decision-making process, encourage autonomy, collaboration, and responsibility, and promote a positive organizational environment with their leadership. In this new work environment, information becomes more visible and easier to share, allowing employees to be more independent in their work. Thus, companies benefit from good employee performance and reduce the need to supervise them (Schwarz Müller et al., 2018).

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, transformational leadership is oriented towards the vision and goals of the organization, which are outlined in action. Transformational leadership is applied through digital leadership, so that is leading; the Camat is also oriented towards the use of information technology. Here the Camat will coordinate with his subordinates regarding sub-district tasks through optimal technology utilization. Information technology has become an absolute necessity amid a policy of restricting physical contact, regional restrictions in several areas, and strict health protocols. The Camat is required to adapt to this situation, so the Camat must use digital media in carrying out their duties. The leadership of the Camat at the sub-district level is very important in improving the performance of public services in the area of Pandalungan. Through the application of digital leadership, the performance of public services can be improved. Even though the Camat and his subordinates do not interact directly, the existence of good virtual communication through technological media can certainly improve the quality of public service performance (sub-district) in the area Pandalungan.

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