

Implementation of the Marriage Management Information System Policy Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation in public services is a crucial phenomenon in the modern era of governance, which demands efficiency, transparency, and accountability. One effort undertaken by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH), which is expected to improve the quality of marriage registration services across all Religious Affairs Offices (KUA). This study aims to analyze the implementation of SIMKAH at the KUA in Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, by examining supporting factors, obstacles, and its impact on public services. A qualitative case study approach was used, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The data were then analyzed using George C. Edwards III's policy implementation model, which encompasses aspects of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure, and is supported by theories of good governance and e-government. The results indicate that the implementation of SIMKAH has brought positive changes in terms of service efficiency, data accuracy, and transparency in administrative processes. However, it faces challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, technological literacy, and resistance from some members of the public to the use of new technologies. This study recommends increasing human resource capacity, strengthening technological infrastructure, and implementing a more intensive outreach strategy to maximize SIMKAH's future use.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought about fundamental changes in the way governments provide services to the public. Amid public demands for fast, transparent, and accountable services, governments are

required to optimally utilize information technology to achieve good governance. Good governance. In the Indonesian context, this is reflected in the e-government development policy stipulated in Presidential Instruction Number 3 of 2003 concerning the National Policy and Strategy for E-Government Development. The implementation of e-government is expected to not only accelerate administrative processes but also improve the quality of public services and build public trust in the government.

One sector receiving attention in the digital transformation agenda is marriage registration services, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. For years, marriage registration services were handled manually, from registration and data recording to reporting to the central level. This manual system often led to various problems such as service delays, data inaccuracies, archiving difficulties, and low information transparency. In line with the development of information technology and demands for bureaucratic reform, the Ministry of Religious Affairs developed the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) as a digital innovation to modernize marriage registration services across all Offices of Religious Affairs (KUA).

SIMKAH is designed to facilitate online marriage registration, integrated marriage data recording, and accurate, real-time reporting. Supported by regulations such as Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 30 of 2024 concerning Marriage Registration and a Circular from the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance, SIMKAH is required to be implemented at all KUA (Religious Affairs Offices) in Indonesia. It is hoped that SIMKAH will improve service efficiency, expedite administrative processes, minimize the potential for data manipulation, and ultimately increase public satisfaction with government services.

However, the implementation of public policies, including SIMKAH, does not always run smoothly. As George C. Edwards III noted, the success of policy implementation is influenced by communication factors, resources, implementer disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Furthermore, Merilee S. Grindle emphasized that the social, political, and cultural context also play a significant role in determining policy effectiveness. In the case of SIMKAH, differences in digital literacy levels among communities, limited technological infrastructure in the regions, and variations in human resource capacity at the implementing level are often key challenges in the implementation process.

Ciparay District in Bandung Regency is one of the locations implementing SIMKAH, as directed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This area has a relatively high number of marriages each year, reflecting the complex challenges faced in implementing SIMKAH at the local level. Therefore, research on SIMKAH implementation at the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) is important to understand the policy's success, the factors influencing it, and its impact on public services in the field of marriage registration.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of SIMKAH at the KUA Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, focusing on the policy implementation process, supporting and inhibiting factors, and its impact on the quality of public services. Using a qualitative approach and a theoretical framework of policy implementation, e-government, and good governance, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of information technology-based public policy implementation studies, while also providing practical recommendations for the government in improving the quality of marriage registration services in the future.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs) in Ciparay District, Bandung Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because the nature of this research aims to understand social phenomena and the process of policy implementation in depth in a real context, rather than simply measuring variables quantitatively. As Creswell (2014) stated, a qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meanings that individuals or groups give to a social or humanitarian problem, prioritizing holistic understanding over statistical generalizations.

The case study method was used because this research focuses on policy implementation in one specific location, namely the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), which has specific social, cultural, and administrative characteristics. Yin (2003) stated that case studies are suitable for researchers who want to answer how and why questions, and when researchers do not have full control over the events being studied and the phenomena being studied are in a real-life context. In this case, the implementation of SIMKAH in the Ciparay KUA is influenced by various factors such as national policies, local infrastructure conditions, human resource capacity, and community response, making the case study approach relevant for gaining a comprehensive understanding. The research location was selected purposively based on the consideration that the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) is one of the KUAs with a high number of marriages in Bandung Regency and has implemented SIMKAH in accordance with the Ministry of Religious Affairs policy. In addition, this location reflects the dynamics of public policy implementation at the sub-district level with all the limitations of technological infrastructure and variations in community digital literacy that are common challenges in many regions in Indonesia.

The data in this study consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, including the Head of the KUA (Religious Affairs Office), SIMKAH operators, registrars, administrative staff, and prospective brides and grooms who used SIMKAH services. The interviews were semi-structured, with the researcher beginning with prepared main questions while still allowing informants the freedom to express their views and experiences broadly. In addition to the interviews, the researcher also conducted direct observations of the marriage registration service process at the KUA, including interactions between KUA staff and the public, the use of the SIMKAH application in marriage administration, and the condition of supporting facilities and infrastructure. Secondary data were obtained from official documents such as laws and regulations related to marriage registration, the Ciparay KUA annual report, SIMKAH usage guidelines from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and academic literature on policy implementation, e-government, and good governance. This secondary data was used to provide policy context and compare field findings with previous studies.

The informant selection technique used purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. In this case, informants were chosen because of their knowledge, experience, or direct involvement in SIMKAH implementation at the Ciparay KUA. The number of informants was not strictly determined, but rather followed the saturation point principle, which is when the information obtained is deemed sufficiently representative of the phenomenon being studied and no new information emerges from additional interviews.

The data collection process was carried out through several stages. First, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to understand the context of the SIMKAH policy, including reviewing regulations, technical guidelines, and implementation reports at the central and regional levels. Second, the researcher developed an interview guide based on variables in George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory, namely communication, resources, implementer disposition, and bureaucratic structure. This guide served to ensure that the collected data covered key aspects influencing policy implementation. Third, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with key informants. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at the Ciparay Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) with an average duration of 45–60 minutes for each informant. Fourth, the researcher conducted participatory observations of service processes at the KUA, such as marriage registration, data verification, recording in SIMKAH, and issuing marriage certificates. These observations provided a direct picture of how SIMKAH operates and how the public responds to the system.

To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation techniques, including both source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants, for example, comparing the opinions of the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) with those of SIMKAH operators or prospective brides and grooms. Method triangulation was

conducted by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Triangulation allows researchers to verify the accuracy of data and reduce potential bias that might arise from relying solely on a single source or data collection technique.

Data analysis was conducted interactively, following the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data obtained from the field. Data presentation was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or charts for easy understanding. Conclusions were drawn by connecting empirical data with relevant theories to answer the research questions. The analysis process was carried out simultaneously with data collection, meaning that researchers began analyzing the initial data obtained in the field and continued to deepen the analysis as data increased. Data analysis techniques in this study included data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and conclusion testing (Kamil.I & Indah, D, 2022). Research ethics were also considered by ensuring that all informants were given an explanation of the research objectives, the confidentiality of data, and their right to refuse or terminate the interview at any time. Researchers used informed consent before conducting interviews and guaranteed informants' anonymity in reporting research results.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study on the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), Bandung Regency, provide a comprehensive overview of the policy implementation process, supporting and inhibiting factors, and its impact on the quality of public services in the field of marriage registration. Based on data obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation studies, the implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay KUA has brought significant changes in the implementation of marriage registration services, although it still faces various challenges that require serious attention from related parties.

In general, the research results indicate that the implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay Religious Affairs Office (KUA) has been carried out in accordance with national policies issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Since the enactment of regulations requiring the use of SIMKAH at all KUAs, including the Ciparay KUA, the marriage registration and recording process has changed from a manual system to a digital one. This change brings several advantages such as accelerated administrative processes, increased data accuracy, easier access to information, and transparency in services. Before SIMKAH, marriage registration was carried out manually by filling out paper forms, recording in a register book, and reporting to the district level periodically. This manual process often caused problems such as delays in reporting, the risk of data loss, duplication of records, and difficulties in verifying the authenticity of documents. With the presence of SIMKAH, all marriage data is now recorded digitally and integrated between the District KUA and the Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, so that reporting can be done in real time and the risk of data errors can be minimized.

However, the implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) is not without challenges that impact its effectiveness. Interviews with KUA employees revealed that one of the main challenges is limited technological infrastructure, particularly unstable internet connections in some areas. This often hinders the smooth running of marriage registration and recording processes, particularly when connection disruptions occur at crucial moments. Furthermore, although most KUA employees have received training in SIMKAH usage, a gap in technological skills remains, particularly among those who have long been accustomed to working with manual systems and are less familiar with digital technology. This demonstrates that human resource readiness is a critical factor in determining the successful implementation of information technology-based policies.

On the community side, the use of SIMKAH for online marriage registration has not been fully optimized. Most prospective brides and grooms still prefer to go directly to the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) to register for several reasons. First, the level of digital literacy in this region varies; some

prospective brides and grooms are not yet accustomed to using information technology-based services. Second, the community feels more confident if the registration process is carried out directly with KUA officers, as they can consult face-to-face regarding the administrative requirements. Third, the perception that the manual process is simpler and does not require an internet connection or specific digital devices makes some people reluctant to switch to online registration. These findings indicate that in addition to technical factors, social and cultural factors also influence the success of SIMKAH implementation.

From the perspective of George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory, the four main variables influencing policy implementation are communication, resources, implementer disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Based on research findings, communication between the Central Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Bandung Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) has been running quite well. Information regarding the SIMKAH policy is conveyed through circulars, training, and regular technical guidance. However, communication to the public as service users still needs to be improved. Socialization regarding the online registration procedure through SIMKAH has not been carried out widely, so many people do not fully understand the benefits and how to use this service. This lack of socialization has resulted in low utilization of the online registration feature by prospective brides and grooms.

In terms of resources, the study found that technological infrastructure support, such as computers, servers, and internet networks, has been provided, but is still inadequate. Some computers used at the Ciparay Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) still have low specifications, which sometimes slows down the data input process. Furthermore, the lack of dedicated technicians at the KUA to handle technical issues often results in lengthy repairs, requiring assistance from the Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office. Human resources are also crucial; despite training, some employees still require intensive support to operate SIMKAH optimally. The lack of operators who fully understand the system is one of the factors hindering smooth service delivery.

The disposition or attitude of implementers towards the SIMKAH policy was generally positive. Most KUA employees welcomed the digitalization of marriage services, believing it would simplify their work, reduce the burden of manual administration, and improve service professionalism. However, this positive attitude has not been fully matched by technical and mental readiness among all employees, especially those who have long been accustomed to manual work methods. Some employees admitted they still need time to adapt to the new system, while others felt burdened by the additional task of learning technology they have not yet fully mastered.

Bureaucratic structure also plays a crucial role in SIMKAH implementation. The Ciparay Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) has standard operating procedures (SOPs) for SIMKAH-based marriage services, but coordination between bureaucratic levels can sometimes be slow, particularly when technical or administrative issues require higher-level decisions. For example, when data entry errors require correction at the district or central level, the correction process often takes a long time due to the need to navigate through several bureaucratic stages. This demonstrates that despite the existing bureaucratic structure, faster and more flexible coordination mechanisms are still needed to ensure more efficient service delivery.

Analysis using Merilee S. Grindle's theory on the content of policy and the context of implementation is also relevant to understanding the implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay KUA. In terms of policy content, the SIMKAH policy has a clear objective: to improve the efficiency, accuracy, and transparency of marriage registration services. This policy is also supported by strong formal regulations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, in terms of the context of implementation, factors such as local infrastructure conditions, human resource capacity, and the level of digital literacy of the community pose challenges that affect the effectiveness of implementation in the field. In other words, even though the policy design is good, the local context is very important in determining the success of its implementation.

Research findings also indicate that the implementation of SIMKAH contributes positively to the principles of good governance. Transparency is increased because marriage data can be accessed digitally and reporting is done in real time. Service accountability is also better maintained because each registration and recording process is well documented in the system. Service efficiency is evident in the reduced time required to process registrations and issue marriage certificates compared to the manual system. However, the principle of community participation still needs to be strengthened through more intensive socialization so that the public understands and utilizes this service optimally. High awareness and active participation from community members are factors in supporting the successful implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay KUA (Astuti, W & Kamil, I, 2024).

First, in terms of supporting factors, the existence of clear regulations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, such as Ministerial Regulation Number 30 of 2024 concerning Marriage Registration and the Circular Letter of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance, provides a strong legal basis for the implementation of SIMKAH. This regulatory support is crucial because it ensures that all KUA (Religious Affairs Offices) in Indonesia have the same obligation to use a digital system for marriage registration. Furthermore, the commitment of the Ciparay KUA leadership was also a crucial factor in encouraging employees to adapt to the new system despite facing various limitations. Public enthusiasm, particularly from the younger generation who are more familiar with digital technology, also helped accelerate the adoption of SIMKAH among service users.

Second, in terms of obstacles, limited technological infrastructure remains a major issue. Unstable internet network quality, computers with varying specifications, and the lack of dedicated technicians at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) to handle technical issues often hinder smooth service delivery. Furthermore, human resource capacity is also a challenge, as not all employees possess adequate technological skills. Some employees, especially those who have long worked with manual systems, require additional time and training to adapt to digital systems. From the community's perspective, low digital literacy among some groups has resulted in suboptimal use of online registration features, leading most prospective brides and grooms to still prefer to register directly at the KUA.

Third, from the perspective of George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory, the four variables influencing successful implementation—communication, resources, implementer disposition, and bureaucratic structure—appear to play different roles in the context of SIMKAH at the Ciparay KUA. Communication between policymakers at the central level and implementers at the regional level has been going quite well, but communication with the community still needs to be strengthened through more intensive and innovative outreach. Technological and human resources are available but are not yet fully adequate, thus requiring strengthening both in terms of infrastructure and HR training. Implementer disposition towards this policy is generally positive, but still needs to be improved so that all employees have the same motivation and readiness to operate SIMKAH. The existing bureaucratic structure already supports SIMKAH implementation, but the inter-agency coordination mechanism still needs to be simplified so that the decision-making process is faster and more responsive to problems that arise in the field.

Fourth, from a good governance perspective, the implementation of SIMKAH has contributed to increased transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public services. Digitally stored marriage data facilitates verification, reporting, and oversight, thus minimizing the potential for administrative irregularities. Service accountability is enhanced because each registration process is well-documented in the system, while efficiency is evident in the reduced time required to process registrations and issue marriage certificates compared to manual systems. However, the principle of public participation still needs to be strengthened through a socialization strategy involving various parties, such as religious leaders, community organizations, and local media, to increase understanding and utilization of this digital service.

Fifth, analysis using Merilee S. Grindle's theory of policy content and implementation context shows that although the SIMKAH policy objectives have been clearly formulated and supported by formal regulations, the implementation context at the local level greatly influences its effectiveness.

Infrastructure conditions, human resource capacity, and the community's digital literacy level are contextual factors that determine the extent to which this policy can be implemented as expected. Thus, improving the implementation context at the local level is key to optimizing the use of SIMKAH in marriage registration services.

Fourth, the bureaucratic coordination mechanism between the District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), the Regency Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementeriaan Agama), and the Central Ministry of Religious Affairs needs to be simplified to expedite decision-making and resolve technical issues. Establishing a helpdesk or technical service center at the district level that is responsive to KUA issues could be one solution to expedite the resolution of technical or administrative issues. Fifth, incentives for KUA employees who excel in operating SIMKAH and providing quality services should also be considered to increase the motivation and commitment of policy implementers.

Sixth, integrating SIMKAH with other information systems related to population administration, such as data from the Population and Civil Registry Office (Dukcapil), religious courts, and other related institutions, can improve the efficiency and accuracy of marriage data at the national level. This integration will facilitate the verification process for prospective brides and grooms, expedite the issuance of official documents, and reduce duplication of records between various government agencies. Seventh, further research can use a quantitative approach to more systematically measure public satisfaction with SIMKAH services, or conduct comparative studies between KUAs in various regions to identify different success factors and obstacles in SIMKAH implementation.

Overall, this discussion indicates that the implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) represents a significant step forward in the digitalization of public services, but still requires improvement in various aspects. Adequate infrastructure support, increased human resource capacity, faster bureaucratic coordination mechanisms, and extensive public outreach are key factors that need to be addressed to fully achieve the policy's objectives. With improvements in these aspects, SIMKAH implementation will not only improve the quality of marriage registration services but will also strengthen public trust in the government's performance in providing information technology-based public services.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs, Bandung Regency, it can be concluded that the digitalization policy for marriage registration services through SIMKAH is an important innovation in realizing good governance and supporting the development of e-government in Indonesia. The implementation of this policy has brought a number of positive changes, especially in terms of accelerating administrative processes, increasing data accuracy, service transparency, and simplifying reporting between the District Office of Religious Affairs, the Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, and the Central Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, findings in the field also indicate that the implementation of SIMKAH is not yet fully optimal because there are still various challenges that require serious attention from the government, both at the central and regional levels.

Overall, the implementation of SIMKAH at the Ciparay District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) represents a significant step forward in modernizing public services in the field of marriage registration. Despite facing various challenges, this policy has significant potential to improve service quality if supported by adequate infrastructure, competent human resources, efficient bureaucratic coordination mechanisms, and active community participation. With improvements in these various aspects, SIMKAH will become not only an administrative instrument but also a symbol of digital transformation in public services that are in line with the principles of good governance and the development of e-government in Indonesia.

Based on these findings, this study recommends several strategic steps to improve SIMKAH implementation at the Ciparay Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and other regions in Indonesia. First, technological infrastructure needs to be strengthened, including the provision of a stable internet

network, standard-specification computers, and dedicated technicians at each KUA to promptly address technical issues. Second, ongoing training for KUA employees should be conducted periodically to ensure all staff have adequate technological skills. This training should cover not only the technical aspects of SIMKAH use, but also digital data management, information security, and technology-based public services. Third, public outreach should be expanded and conducted in creative and innovative ways, for example through social media, the KUA website, digital brochures, or collaboration with religious instructors and community leaders. The goal is to improve the community's digital literacy so they can optimally utilize the online registration feature.

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