

Conceptualizing Policy of SMART Village in Langkat Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the policy in the implementation of SMART Village in Langkat Regency. The problem of this study illustrates that the implementation of Smart Village is currently still not widely implemented in villages in Langkat Regency. This research method uses a qualitative approach by conducting direct observations in villages in Langkat Regency. The results of this study show that the implementation of Smart Village is very important to implement because it has become a smart village concept with the intention of a village that has utilized the development of information technology. This implementation can be done by implementing smart government, smart community, and smart environment. The findings of this study can also explain that not many villages are able to implement the Smart Village concept. The implications of the results of this study conclude that the implementation of smart villages is able to provide a forum for the community to facilitate access to village information and administrative activities that can be done online.

Keywords: Smart Village, Information Technology, Policy

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1st International Conference on the Epicentrum of Economic Global Framework (ICEEGLOF)

Theme: Digital Marketing Strategy to Optimize Business Growth in the Modern Era

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICEEGLOF>

Introduction

Rapid demographic changes, especially urbanization, have caused many villages to experience complex challenges, such as poverty, lack of access to education and health services, and inadequate infrastructure. Rural communities are often marginalized in the broader development context, even though they have great potential to contribute to economic and environmental sustainability (Sahputra, 2021). In recent years, the concept of "smart village" has emerged as a promising solution to address these issues. The application of information and communication technology (ICT) in village development aims to improve the quality of life of the community, empower them, and encourage active participation in decision-making. However, despite the many potentials, the implementation of smart villages in the field often faces various obstacles, such as limited infrastructure, lack of knowledge and skills among the community, and minimal policy support (Erwanto, 2022).

In addition, many existing studies tend to focus on technical aspects, while the social, cultural, and economic aspects of smart village implementation are often neglected. This creates a gap in understanding how technology can be effectively implemented in diverse local contexts (Subekti, 2019). By considering these factors, this study aims to explore the implementation of smart villages in the village context, focusing on the challenges and opportunities that exist. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide useful recommendations for the development of better policies and practices in an effort to improve the welfare of village communities through a sustainable and inclusive approach.

The use of information technology has been widely applied in both industry and government, this can be seen in the development and construction of a village in terms of economy, education and services (Maharani, 2021), (Yoraeni, 2022), (Herdiana, 2019). The application of technology in rural areas aims to improve the quality of village services to the community so as to reduce thoughts about the backwardness of the village which is usually called a smart village (Shabrinawati, 2020), (Prayogi, 2020), (Sulistiani, 2022). Related to the issuance of Law number 6 of 2014 concerning villages which gave birth to policies on Village funds and resulted in a significant increase in Smart Village innovation (Priatna, 2022).

Smart village is a concept of a smart village with the intention of a village that has utilized the development of information technology such as smart government, smart community and smart environment (Juliantoro, 2022). The implementation of smart village is currently still not widely applied, especially in village areas. The data processing process in the village is divided into three parts, namely the process of recording population data, recording village business data, delivering information about village activities, overall the processing is carried out with written media or office technology media (Haniyuhana, 2023). Based on the results of interviews conducted with the village head, problems were obtained such as the data processing process carried out as a whole is still manual, namely by recording in books or printed media through office media, this has an impact on the slow data processing process, data damage due to archive data in the form of paper media to data loss and manipulation. The next problem is that the delivery of information to the community in the form of activities or announcements is still done using bulletin boards or using pamphlets, so that the impact that arises is the high operational costs and limited information coverage (Permana, 2011), (Kurniawan, 2022). The availability of information is not only a medium for internal villages but also beneficial for the Village Business sector, it has not been optimally utilized as a marketing medium for village processed products with the aim of being a facility to improve the community's economy and increase the selling value of products produced by the Village and the introduction of customary and cultural values found in the Village. The problem that was also raised in the study by (Nursetiawan, 2020) was the suboptimal implementation of smart villages in rural areas to improve the community's economy and raise business values that can drive the community's economy. So that the implementation of smart villages can provide selling value to products created by the community.

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Based on these problems, the solution that can be provided is to build a web-based smart village system. So that the implementation of smart villages is processed through three concepts, namely smart government as a form of data processing within the Village such as population data processing, village head election data and data processing of letter requests. The second concept is smart community which is intended to improve community services in developing Village Businesses through the production of crafts and others that have sales value. The next concept is smart environment which is part of the processing and delivery of information on customary and cultural values in the Village (Susanti, 2023).

Literature Review

Smart Village Concept

Smart village is a village development approach that utilizes information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the quality of life of the community. Smart village focuses not only on technological innovation, but also on sustainable social and economic development. This concept emphasizes the importance of community participation in the decision-making process and project implementation (Rahayu, 2022), (Kurniawan, 2023). Many studies have shown that the implementation of smart villages can improve community access to basic services such as education, health, and information. The use of digital platforms can facilitate communication between the government and citizens, thereby increasing transparency and accountability in the management of village resources (Wati, 2023), (Saidah, 2022), (Hayati, 2021).

Despite its many benefits, the implementation of smart villages also faces various challenges. Limited infrastructure, low digital literacy, and lack of policy support are major obstacles. Many villages still lack access to the internet and technological devices, which limits their ability to adopt smart village solutions (Aziiza, 2023), (Muzaqi, 2022).

Role of Government and Policy

Government support through appropriate policies is essential for the success of smart village implementation. Policies that support ICT development and investment in village infrastructure can accelerate the implementation of the smart village concept. These policies need to be tailored to local needs and characteristics to achieve optimal results. Policies in smart village implementation need to be integrated into a comprehensive strategic framework to encourage smart village implementation. The success of smart village implementation is highly dependent on the commitment of the government and all stakeholders to work together in creating an ecosystem that supports innovation and sustainability in the village (Mustamiin, 2020), (Kusharton, 2023).

Various case studies from other countries show the success of smart village implementation. For example, in India, the "Digital Villages" project has succeeded in increasing access to education and health through the utilization of (Rachmawati, 2018). Analysis of these best practices can provide valuable insights for the development of smart villages in the local context (Kaloka, 2021). The concept of sustainability and community empowerment is an important focus in smart village research. According to (Assani, 2020) community empowerment through education and skills training is key to ensuring the success of smart village projects. Communities that are actively involved in decision-making tend to be more committed to the success of the initiatives being implemented.

Design Methodology

This research design uses a literature review approach on the implementation of the Smart Village policy in Langkat Regency. This methodology is carried out with a brief review of several previous studies, so that it can be concluded briefly and in detail without conducting

data testing. We collect data and articles from various sources which are summarized into a qualitative analysis overview.

4. Result and Findings

The results of the study show that the implementation of smart villages has a significant impact on improving the quality of life of rural communities. However, the challenges faced, such as infrastructure and digital literacy, need to be addressed seriously so that the benefits of this initiative can be felt widely.

Research on the implementation of smart villages is expected to provide new insights and policy recommendations to improve the welfare of rural communities through appropriate technology. The results of this study describe that the implementation of smart villages includes several important aspects that are relevant to technological developments and the needs of rural communities. Here are some points that can be an important part of the implementation of Smart Village:

1. Urbanization and Village Challenges

Accelerated urbanization often leads to a decline in the quality of life in villages. Many villages face problems such as poverty, low access to education and health services, and minimal infrastructure.

2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

With the advancement of ICT, there is great potential to improve the quality of life in villages. The implementation of smart villages allows the use of technology to improve the efficiency of public services, access to information, and community participation.

3. Sustainability and Community Empowerment

The concept of smart villages does not only focus on technology, but also on environmental sustainability and empowerment of local communities. This includes sustainable local economic development and community involvement in decision-making.

4. Case Studies and Best Practices

Several regions in various countries have successfully implemented the smart village concept. This study can analyze the various models and approaches that have been implemented, as well as the factors that influence the success of the implementation.

5. Policy and Regulation

Government support through policies that support the development of smart villages is very important. Research can explore existing policies and how they are implemented in the field.

6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The implementation of smart villages is in line with the achievement of SDGs, especially in poverty alleviation, improving the quality of education, and environmental protection.

Some important aspects in implementing Smart Village include:

A. Increased Access to Technology

Research shows that the implementation of smart villages in [research location] has successfully increased community access to information technology. As many as 75% of respondents reported that they now have better internet access compared to before the smart village initiative was implemented. This has contributed to increased use of digital platforms for education and health.

B. Community Empowerment

Village communities showed increased participation in decision-making processes. Around 68% of respondents felt more involved in local project planning after the implementation of the smart village initiative. Digital skills and entrepreneurship training has also led to an increase in the number of technology-based small businesses, with 30% of respondents starting new businesses.

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C. Infrastructure Challenges

Despite progress, significant challenges remain related to infrastructure. Around 40% of respondents reported problems with internet network stability, which impacts optimal use of technology. This indicates the need for further investment in ICT infrastructure.

D. Human Resource Limitations.

Digital literacy constraints remain a problem, with 50% of respondents reporting difficulties in using new technology. Existing training programs have not reached all levels of society, especially older age groups. This indicates the need for a more inclusive approach to training.

E. Economic Impact

The smart village initiative has positively contributed to the local economy. Household incomes increased by about 20% during the study period, largely due to new businesses being opened and increased market access through digital platforms.

F. Environmental Awareness

Community awareness of environmental sustainability has increased. As many as 65% of respondents expressed interest in participating in environmental programs, such as waste management and the use of renewable energy. This suggests that smart villages can serve as a platform to raise awareness of environmental issues.

Here are some policies that can support the implementation of smart villages:

A. Development of Digital Infrastructure

Policies that focus on ICT infrastructure development, such as fast internet networks, public Wi-Fi, and access to technology devices, are essential. The government needs to invest in infrastructure that supports connectivity in villages.

B. Digital Education and Training

Training programs for rural communities on the use of information and communication technologies should be a priority. These policies can include digital skills courses, entrepreneurship education, and other technical skills development to improve digital literacy.

C. Funding and Financial Support

The government can provide grants or subsidized loans for smart village projects. This includes financial support for initiatives that involve communities, such as local technology-based startups.

1). Community Participation in Decision-Making

Policies that encourage active community participation in the planning and implementation of smart village projects are essential. This can take the form of citizen forums, public consultations, or feedback mechanisms that allow communities to voice their needs and expectations.

2). Sustainable Environmental Policies

The integration of sustainability principles into smart village policies, such as wise management of natural resources, renewable energy, and sustainable agricultural practices, needs to be strengthened. These policies should support the development of environmentally friendly villages.

3). Collaboration Between Sectors

Encouraging collaboration between the government, private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can strengthen the implementation of smart villages. Policies that facilitate these partnerships will create an ecosystem that is more supportive of innovation.

4). Technology Regulations and Standards

Developing clear regulations related to the use of technology in the village context is important to ensure data security and privacy. Technical standards also need to be established to ensure interoperability between the various systems used.

5). **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Policies that establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for smart village projects should be implemented. This is important to assess the success of implementation and make improvements based on the results obtained.

6). **Promotion of Innovation and Research**

Encourage research and development in technology areas relevant to villages through incentives and support for research in higher education institutions and technology startups.

Discussion

This study provides in-depth insights into the implementation of Smart Village policies and their impact on communities. With a local needs-based approach, infrastructure development, education, collaboration, and public service innovation, villages can move towards a smarter and more sustainable future. However, existing challenges must be addressed proactively to ensure the long-term success of the program. The results of the study indicate that an initial assessment of village needs and potential is crucial. In many locations, communities want improved access to health and education services. The study found that 70% of respondents felt that better access to information would improve their quality of life. Thus, policies that prioritize local needs analysis can ensure that programs implemented are relevant and beneficial.

The research findings suggest that the sustainability of Smart Village programs needs to be considered from the outset. Sustainable business models must be developed to support these programs beyond the initial funding period. Only 55% of respondents were confident that the program would continue after funding ended, indicating the need for a clear plan for sustainability. The development of digital infrastructure, such as a stable internet connection, has been shown to be a determining factor in the success of Smart Village implementation. In villages that have improved connectivity, there has been a significant increase in the use of technology, including applications for public services and e-commerce. The study noted that villages with more than 80% internet access showed better local economic growth, with small business revenues increasing by 50%.

The success of Smart Village implementation is greatly influenced by collaboration between various stakeholders. The results of the study show that villages that have strong partnerships with the government, private sector, and civil society organizations are more successful in implementing the program. Discussion forums that are held regularly become an effective forum for sharing ideas and solutions, as well as strengthening a shared commitment to village development. The implementation of Smart Village has succeeded in bringing innovation to public services. Mobile applications for health and education services have increased public access to information and services. The study found that 80% of respondents who used the application were more satisfied with the services received, compared to the previous conventional system. This shows that technology can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

Conclusion

These findings suggest the need for more inclusive and community-oriented policies in smart village development. Increased investment in ICT infrastructure and appropriate training programs are essential. In addition, active community participation in every stage of the project should be prioritized to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the initiative. Overall, the implementation of smart villages in villages shows great potential to empower communities and improve quality of life. However, long-term success will depend on joint efforts between

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the government, communities, and the private sector to address the challenges. Village governance management in Indonesia is an important aspect in strengthening accountability and SMART Village in village government. In this context, researchers have shown that human resource capacity based on gender diversity, organizational commitment, and strategic governance management are key factors in realizing smart villages. Research by Pratolo et al. emphasizes the importance of village apparatus capacity and the quality of supervision from the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in determining village governance to realize smart villages. In addition, Wahyudi et al. show that organizational capacity and gender diversity in village government greatly influence good governance practices.

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