"WA Kepo" Innovation as an Online Information and Service Provider in Sumedang City

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Abstract. Technological advances have significantly influenced the dynamics of bureaucracy. Public organizations have to improve services, by carrying out transformation through the innovation. Sumedang City is recognized as a best practice city in creating innovation, especially through the "WA Kepo" innovation. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data was obtained from interviews and document studies. The research results reveal the journey of the innovation idea, the context of its implementation, the positive impact it produces, and the strategy for sustaining this innovation. This research provides in-depth insight into how the "WA Kepo" innovation not only changes the way public services are delivered, but also makes a positive contribution to the people of Sumedang City.

Keywords: Public Service; Innovation; Performance; Government

1 Introduction

The era of globalization demands the increase of advanced technology development to make various jobs easier. The impact of globalization is also felt by government organizations that act as public service providers. As one of the duties and functions of government, providing optimal public services to the community is a necessity. Innovation is an inseparable part of the globalization phenomenon, encouraging the emergence of various solutions to increase effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out these duties. Every innovation that develops in various government institutions becomes an important supporting tool in the governance of government.

The emergence of innovation in public services aims to create fast, easy and precise services. Meanwhile, the goal behind the emergence of innovation in public organizations is to achieve a good management of governance, which is often referred as good governance. Good quality of public services is an indicator of government performance that satisfies the community. Therefore, implementing innovation in the public service sector is not only a necessity, but also a strategic step in proving the quality of government performance and public satisfaction with the services provided.

The ability to innovate in the context of governance shows a crucial role in optimizing potential, both at the central and regional government levels. Innovation, as a result of bureaucratic reform, is an important basis for the progress of public institutions. In this context, information technology appears as a key element in improving government governance processes, especially in the provision of public services. The development of information

technology has not only changed the way the government interacts with the public, but also created various new products. By integrating technology, the government can create innovative solutions that are efficient and responsive, improve the quality of services, and better meet the needs of the community. In this way, innovation related to governance is not only a concept, but also a concrete step towards public services that are more adaptive and oriented to the needs of the community.

This article aims to discuss innovations initiated by the Sumedang Regency Government. In 2023, Sumedang Regency won the Best of the Best award in the West Java Innovation Competition (KIJB) held by the West Java Provincial Government[1]. This success is the third achievement for the Sumedang Regency Government, confirming its reputation as an innovative regency in the West Java. Not only that, the Sumedang Regency government also received the Innovative Government Award (IGA) in 2023 from the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is the fourth time for Sumedang Regency Government received the awards. This achievement was given as appreciation for various innovations that have succeeded in facilitating government administration, especially in public services. One of the superior innovations of the Sumedang Regency Government is "WA Kepo", which is an online information and service provider that can be accessed via WhatsApp Messenger. This innovation is an example of success in presenting technological solutions that facilitate public access to information and public services.

The phenomenon of "WA Kepo" innovation became the main impetus for researcher to study more deeply regarding the creation of this innovation. The crucial questions that arise are how this innovative concept emerged, what is the support from the innovation environment, how the innovation results, the innovation impact, and the innovation sustainability strategies. In analyzing the "WA Kepo" innovation, this research adopts concepts and theories from the innovation model introduced by Flootje and Ende[2] (2010). This model provides a solid framework for evaluating the various elements involved in the innovation process. With this approach, the research is expected to be able to thoroughly reveal the dynamics of the "WA Kepo" innovation, as well as provide deeper insight into its potential in increasing the effectiveness of public services at the local government level.
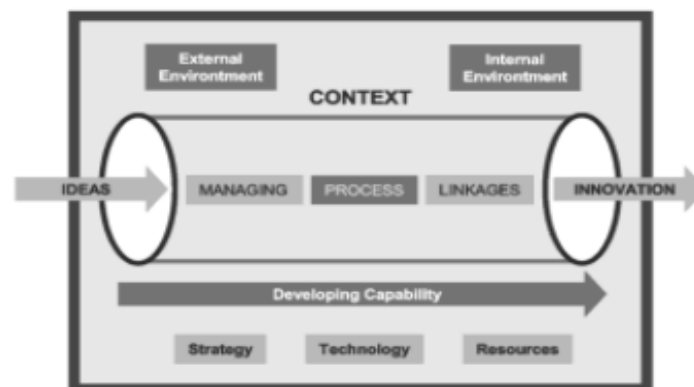
Picture 1. Innovation Models by Flootje and Ende (2010)

The innovation model describes that an innovation starts from an idea that is elaborated, managed and developed until it becomes an innovative activity or product. Innovation does not emerge spontaneously, but through structured and planned stages. Innovative ideas are at the

heart of this process and are the main driver for further development. In addition, innovation cannot be separated from its context. Innovation exists and develops in a certain environment which can influence the course of the innovative process. Factors such as organizational culture, leadership structure, and community conditions play a role in shaping the character and success of an innovation.

Then, to increase innovation capacity, efforts need to involve creating strategies, optimizing the use of resources and applying technology. Building this capacity is a key to facing challenges and taking the advantage of opportunities that arise around innovation. This whole process can ultimately create an innovation that has novel value and is expected to provide high benefits. The novelty value of innovation reflects the extent to which an idea can change or improve a situation, while high benefits indicate that the innovation can have a positive impact.

2   Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods by collecting data using interview techniques with related parties and literature studies related to the "WA Kepo" innovation as one of the innovations in Sumedang Regency. Interviews were conducted by collecting data directly from competent sources, especially parties from the Sumedang Regency Communication, Informatics, Coding and Statistics Service and related service units. The criteria for selecting resource persons were based on their in-depth understanding of the "WA Kepo" innovation journey and its implementation. By listening to their experiences and views, this research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of how these innovations emerge, develop, and are implemented.

Meanwhile, the literature study is focused on various documents and reports related to the "WA Kepo" innovation. By utilizing this literature, research will explore certain aspects related to this innovation. The information contained in the document will provide additional perspective and support the findings from the interviews, providing a strong basis for data analysis. By combining data from interviews and literature studies, this research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the "WA Kepo" innovation in Sumedang Regency and explore the key aspects that influence its success and innovative impact in public services.

3   Result and Discussion

"WA Kepo" is an abbreviation of WhatsApp for online information and service needs in Sumedang Regency. This platform makes it easier for people to access various information and online services about Sumedang. How to use it is very easy by typing #SIMPATI and sending it to 0811-2220-2220 via Whatsapp Messenger. "WA Kepo" is designed to function as a two-way communication tool between the community and local government. By prioritizing ease and convenience of use, "WA Kepo" is an innovative solution for getting information about Sumedang Regency and using available online services.

People can get answers to their information needs quickly and efficiently through this digital platform. In addition, the online services integrated in "WA Kepo" can cover various things, such as applying for permits, registering for activities, or even getting health services. Therefore, "WA Kepo" not only functions as an information provider but also helps the people of Sumedang Regency get direct access to various public services. Analysis of the "WA Kepo"

innovation will adopt the innovation model proposed by Flootje and Ende (2010). The following is the explanation.

3.1 How are Innovative Ideas Obtained?

"WA Kepo" started with an idea regarding various changes in the need for public services. For example, "WA Kepo" emerged as a personal service because it was able to meet people's information needs by adapting it to the unique needs of each person. In this way, the service is not just general, but provides a more personalized experience and suits each person's unique needs. Apart from that, because people tend to want fast and responsive access to information, "WA Kepo" is the answer of that instant service. The ability to obtain information instantly and interactively through this platform makes it more relevant and efficient in the context of today's public services.

"WA Kepo" has also become a popular service because it utilizes popular platforms such as WhatsApp. By using an application that is popular and frequently used by the public, "WA Kepo" can have more users, making it a popular innovation and getting a lot of attention. The novelty of "WA Kepo" that is highlighted is the integration of artificial intelligence (IA) via WhatsApp with public services. It creates a new service model that combines artificial intelligence (IA) with a widely known communications platform. With this integration "WA Kepo" is not just an information service but goes further than that to change the way the government interacts with its people.

3.2 Innovation Context: Internal and External

Innovations that can adapt and respond to the needs of their environment have a great opportunity to succeed. In the context of the "WA Kepo" innovation, this point is the key to success because the adoption of artificial intelligence technology requires high adaptation from public sector human resources in Sumedang Regency. In addition, when talking about government organizations consisting of various organizational units, business process integration is required. The "WA Kepo" innovation not only requires technological support, but also good coordination between different organizational units to ensure integration in its implementation. Business process integration is an important step in ensuring that this innovation can be implemented efficiently and effectively throughout the organization.

The importance of external support is also a key aspect of successful innovation. The "WA Kepo" innovation has received support from the public who increasingly need fast and easy services and information. The positive response of the community to this innovation provides added value and validation of its success. People who actively use "WA Kepo" are an important indicator that the innovation fulfills public needs. Thus, looking at the context of this innovation, it can be seen that the "WA Kepo" innovation meets the success criteria because it is able to adapt to the surrounding environment both internally and externally. All of these elements synergize to support the success and sustainability of this innovation in providing better public services.

3.3 Technology, and Resources to Build Innovation Capacity

In developing an innovation, efforts to increase innovation capacity become crucial. One effective way to achieve this is through implementing the right strategies. The strategy used to optimize this "WA Kepo" innovation is by utilizing technology. For example, "WA Kepo" uses an open source approach by utilizing the WhatsApp application which can be downloaded and used for free by the public. The choice of this technology aims to ensure maximum accessibility for users. By choosing a platform that is common and widely accessible, it is hoped that this innovation can be more easily accepted and used by the public.

Then, increasing the digital literacy of public sector human resources, especially in the use of technology for services, is another strategy being implemented. With the development of this competency, human resources involved in implementing the "WA Kepo" innovation will better understand how to use technology in public services. By strengthening the foundation of innovation through a combination of these two strategies, it is hoped that "WA Kepo" can continue to develop and provide maximum benefits in providing innovative and efficient public services.

3.4 Results of Innovation Implementation

Sumedang Regency through "WA Kepo" is capturing innovation opportunities. In the "WA Kepo" innovation, the Sumedang Regency government highlights innovations that can create an impact on society at large. With more than 20,000 user communities, "WA Kepo" has achieved significant achievements, showing that this innovation has attracted attention and is well received by the community. The number of people who achieve this shows that this service provides benefits that are recognized by the community. However, based on interview results, until 2022 community participation using "WA Kepo" is still relatively low, only 20% of the population of Sumedang Regency using "WA Kepo". Socialization of "WA Kepo" must be carried out massively and continuously so that people can know what the function is and how to use "WA Kepo". The predecessor application before "WA Kepo" was initiated was Sumedang Simpati Quick Response (SSQR). Sumedang Simpati Quick Response (SSQR) experiences several obstacles, namely that there are still many procedures that are carried out manually so that the public and operators do not work easily and quickly, so "WA Kepo" is expected to be the solution to these problems because with "WA Kepo", the system is more massive done digitally and automatically, so it will make the work of operators and service recipients easier.[3]

In one day on average "WA Kepo" can serve around 700 chats. This figure shows the number of user activities that use this service to obtain information and services. The capacity to handle such a large number of chats in one day shows the readiness and efficiency of the service. In addition, "WA Kepo" has issued 19,000 services, one of which is a village certificate. This achievement shows that this innovation offers various types of services, so that it not only provides information but also meets the administrative needs of the community. This shows the ability of this innovation to provide services that suit the various needs of society. Overall, these figures show that "WA Kepo" has strived to be an innovative solution to provide well-received and effective public services.

3.5 Impact of Innovation on Development

The "WA Kepo" innovation has had a significant positive impact on the government and society, creating positive changes in the delivery of public services in Sumedang Regency. For the Sumedang Regency government, this innovation is a real step towards the goal of West Java Province become a digital province. The Sumedang Regency Government is assisting digital transformation through the use of "WA Kepo". Then, this innovation has also expanded the range of services by providing services via popular platforms such as WhatsApp. Increasing public service satisfaction, as measured by the public's positive response to faster and easier access to services and information, is another positive effect obtained by the Sumedang Regency Government.[4]

Then, for the public, the innovation of "WA Kepo" an change the face of public service bureaucracy. Quick and responsive access makes public service bureaucracy shorter and more efficient. In addition, this innovation increases people's digital literacy, encouraging them to become more familiar and skilled in using digital technology. Additionally, people got a benefit from time and cost savings. Overall, the "WA Kepo" innovation resulted in improvements to public services as well as a domino effect that produced a more digitally skilled society and a government that was more responsive to the needs of its people.

3.6 Sustainability of Innovation

Innovation often faces challenges related to sustainability, "WA Kepo" innovation has a main strategy to face these challenges. One of the main strategies for maintaining the sustainability of the "WA Kepo" innovation is through massive promotion of the platform and its features. By carrying out intensive promotion, this innovation can continue to be known and accessed by the public. Good promotion will increase public awareness of the existence of this service, encouraging more active use so as to maintain the sustainability of this innovation.

Another strategy implemented is integration with many other services. By integrating "WA Kepo" with various services, the benefits continue to increase. These integrations can cover various aspects, including expanding the types of services provided and improving functionality. This makes "WA Kepo" not only an information tool but also a more comprehensive public service center.

Apart from that, the "WA Kepo" innovation also has the potential for replication in other areas. The fact that more than 50 districts/cities have replicated this innovation shows its success and the possibility of it becoming a solution that can be adopted in various regional contexts. This replication potential could become a model for other regions that want to improve their public services through technology[5]

4   Conclusion

The "WA Kepo" Innovation as an online information and service provider in Sumedang Regency has created a significant positive impact, both for the government and society. The use of information technology, particularly through the popular WhatsApp Messenger application, helps realize the goals of Sumedang Regency. It is in accordance with Sumedang Regency's

motto, "Small feature big impact". Analysis using the Flootje and Ende (2010) innovation model shows that "WA Kepo" is not only an information service, but also the answers of personal needs, provides instant services, and becomes popular by utilizing WhatsApp Messenger as a familiar platform. The integration of artificial intelligence through WhatsApp provides a new dimension in public service.

As one of the innovative regency, Sumedang with "WA Kepo" shows that innovation in public services can bring a significant changes and provide solutions to meet the needs of modern society. The success of "WA Kepo" has become an inspiration for other regency to adopt a similar model, encouraging the creation of an innovation ecosystem in various regions in Indonesia.

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