Strengthening Transformational Leadership Based on Local Wisdom in Supporting Digital Transformation in Pesanggrahan Village, Mojokerto Regency

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Abstract: The development of digital technology requires villages to transform not only their governance but also their public awareness of digital opportunities and risks. However, the process of digital transformation cannot be separated from the local socio-cultural context. This Community Service (PKM) activity aims to strengthen local wisdom-based transformational leadership as a strategy for dealing with digital dynamics in Pesanggrahan Village, Kutorejo District, Mojokerto Regency. The implementation methods included a situation analysis, program socialization, digital literacy seminars, discussions on Pancasila values, and mentoring for village officials, community leaders, religious leaders, and Karang Taruna youth. The activity results showed an increase in participants' understanding of digital literacy, media ethics, and the relevance of local values, such as cooperation, deliberation, and tolerance, in supporting the village's digital transformation. The community also showed enthusiasm for participating in the development of digital content and technology-based services. This PKM concluded that effective digital transformation requires adaptive, character-based leadership rooted in local cultural values. Collaboration between universities, village governments, and communities is an essential prerequisite for promoting inclusive and sustainable social change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in Indonesia has been one of the most significant drivers of social change in the last decade. Villages, as the foremost unit of government, are no longer perceived as isolated traditional spaces but have increasingly become strategic hubs for modern governance, technology-based public services, and strengthened community participation. This shift is evident in initiatives such as Village Information Systems, which aim to improve administrative efficiency and citizen satisfaction. However, the transformation is unfolding alongside persistent structural challenges. Many villages continue to struggle with implementation due to limited digital infrastructure, insufficient skills, and the absence of collaborative governance and effective stakeholder engagement (Sihotang et al., 2023).

At the same time, a growing body of research highlights how digitalisation can inadvertently reproduce or even intensify existing inequalities. The "periphery-centric"

approach illustrates that although marginalised communities possess the capacity to innovate within digital ecosystems, they often confront new forms of exclusion rooted in long-standing social disparities (Priyadharma, 2024). The Digital Society Index further reveals significant regional gaps, especially in eastern Indonesia, where disparities in connectivity, digital literacy, and institutional support remain acute (Jaya et al., 2024). Consequently, while digital transformation holds substantial promise for enhancing governance effectiveness and public service delivery, it must be accompanied by deliberate efforts to address inequality, ensuring that modernisation processes are inclusive, equitable, and socially just (Lukman & Hakim, 2024; Latupeirissa et al., 2024).

At the same time, a growing body of research highlights how digitalisation can inadvertently reproduce or even intensify existing inequalities. The "periphery-centric" approach illustrates that although marginalised communities possess the capacity to innovate within digital ecosystems, they often confront new forms of exclusion rooted in long-standing social disparities (Priyadharma, 2024). The Digital Society Index further reveals significant regional gaps, especially in eastern Indonesia, where disparities in connectivity, digital literacy, and institutional support remain acute (Jaya et al., 2024). Consequently, while digital transformation holds substantial promise for enhancing governance effectiveness and public service delivery, it must be accompanied by deliberate efforts to address inequality, ensuring that modernisation processes are inclusive, equitable, and socially just (Lukman & Hakim, 2024; Latupeirissa et al., 2024). Indonesia is facing increasing symptoms of intolerance, polarization, and weakening social cohesion phenomena that can be felt down to the village level. Several studies show that intolerance and social conflict are no longer limited to urban areas but have permeated local spaces due to national political dynamics, the uncontrolled spread of information, and identity competition on social media.

Huda (2023) notes that in recent years Indonesia has experienced "an increase in intolerance and social tensions that have the potential to threaten national unity," especially when democratic freedoms are not balanced with an understanding of diversity. This condition puts villages in a vulnerable position, especially ahead of political events such as general and regional elections, when group sentiments are often used to mobilize voters.

It is in this context that the village of Pesanggrahan, Kutorejo District, Mojokerto Regency, becomes particularly relevant for study. This village is located at the crossroads between strong cultural traditions and rapid modernization. Its strategic location, surrounded by industrial areas and tourist routes, makes its social interactions increasingly diverse and complex. On the one hand, this diversity is an excellent opportunity to accelerate village

development; on the other hand, without strong leadership, these changes can lead to social friction, information inequality, and low productive use of technology.

To address these challenges, transformational leadership based on local wisdom is urgently needed. Village leaders are not only required to be adaptive to technology but also capable of preserving the fundamental values that have long existed in the community, such as cooperation, tolerance, deliberation, and social solidarity. These values are not merely cultural symbols, but adequate social capital for maintaining harmony in the digital age.

On the other hand, the low level of digital literacy among rural communities needs special attention. Many residents do not yet have adequate skills to sort information, understand digital security risks, or utilize technology for economic and administrative needs. This results in vulnerability to hoaxes, hate speech, and even political polarization based on misleading information.

This Community Service Program (PKM) is designed to address these challenges by integrating two main aspects: strengthening transformational leadership grounded in local cultural values and improving the community's digital literacy. Through seminars, discussions, and training, this activity seeks to build an understanding that digital transformation is not only about using technology, but also about maintaining social cohesion and strengthening village identity.

With this approach, PKM is expected to help Pesanggrahan Village build a leadership and community ecosystem that is digitally literate, inclusive, and deeply rooted in the values of Pancasila and local wisdom.

2. METHOD

The activities in this Community Service Program (PKM) were designed using a community needs-based approach, placing community needs and participation at the core. This approach was chosen because the social conditions in Pesanggrahan Village indicate that the program's success depends not only on the quality of the material but also on the community's active involvement, the relevance of the activities to everyday reality, and the program's ability to build collective awareness. The process began with a situational analysis to understand the community's social, cultural, and digital conditions through field visits and informal interviews with the village head, village assistants, religious leaders, community leaders, and youth organizations. This stage helped identify challenges such as low digital literacy, the potential for polarization from inaccurate information, and the underutilization of technology in public services. On the other hand, this analysis also identifies the strengths of the village, including

solid social networks, the values of cooperation and deliberation that are still alive, and the capacity of young people as agents of change. All of this information serves as the basis for preparing intervention plans and activity materials tailored to the field context.

Based on these findings, the team developed an activity plan outlining objectives, intervention types, target participants, and expected outcomes. The planning was carried out together with village officials to ensure the suitability of the local context, with targets including village officials, youth organizations, PKK women's groups, religious leaders, community leaders, and youth communities across groups. The core activities were designed as comprehensive sessions that not only delivered content but also created space for dialogue, reflection, and collaboration. A transformational leadership workshop was one of the main sessions, focusing on visionary leadership grounded in cooperation, deliberation, and the use of technology to improve public services. Group discussions were used to explore participants' experiences and formulate solutions relevant to village culture. In addition, a seminar on Pancasila and local democracy was held as an egalitarian space to reflect on Pancasila values amid intolerance, political differences, and the need to create a safe and inclusive digital space. After the activities took place, evaluations were conducted through observation, reflective discussions, and participant response assessments, accompanied by brief follow-up communication with village officials to monitor initial initiatives in administrative digitization and to develop ideas for digital content aligned with local culture. The entire process was documented in photos, videos, and field notes as material for preparing final reports, scientific articles, media publications, and reflections for the development of the next PKM program, while also strengthening academic accountability and the sustainability of the impact on the community.

3. Results

Social Dynamics & Challenges of Intolerance in the Digital Age

The social dynamics of Pesanggrahan Village show changes in community interaction patterns, increasingly influenced by the development of digital technology and social media use. Although geographically this village has a strong social and communal character, the unstoppable flow of digital information makes the community vulnerable to negative influences such as misinformation, hate speech, and intolerant sentiments. This phenomenon aligns with the national trend of increasing social polarization in recent years. Huda (2023) notes that freedom in Indonesia's democratic space is often not accompanied by the community's ability to understand and respect differences, thereby creating the potential for

intolerance that threatens social cohesion. This pattern is also evident in the experiences of Pesanggrahan residents, mainly when issues of religion, politics, or identity spread through social media without adequate verification.

The PKM activities carried out show that some people still lack the capacity to distinguish between accurate and misleading information. When information is not verified, people's interpretations are easily influenced by emotions or the preferences of certain groups. This is exacerbated by a lack of digital literacy and poor critical thinking skills in accessing news through digital platforms.

Several training participants said that minor conflicts between residents often stem from misunderstandings of information shared via WhatsApp or Facebook. This condition shows that digital media not only shapes how residents communicate but also how they understand social reality. However, PKM activities show that the Pesanggrahan Village community has substantial social capital to overcome these challenges.

In discussions and seminars, residents demonstrated a basic awareness of the importance of social harmony and diversity. They understand that intolerance is not only about differences, but also about weak dialogue mechanisms and low digital literacy. Thus, the digital literacy training provided is not only a means of improving skills but also an essential tool for building the village's social resilience amid the rapid flow of digital information.

Transformational Leadership Based on Local Wisdom

The implementation of PKM shows that transformational leadership is a key element in managing social and digital change in Pesanggrahan Village. The community needs leaders who are not only capable of mastering administrative and technological aspects but also able to inspire, maintain social harmony, and facilitate citizen participation in decision-making. Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to elevate the community's potential, build trust, and foster a collective vision for the village's future. This concept of leadership is particularly relevant in the context of villages entering the digitalization phase.

In various workshop sessions and discussions, participants understood that local values such as cooperation, deliberation, tolerance, and solidarity are essential foundations for the practice of transformational leadership. These values have long been part of the village's social tradition and serve as guidelines for solving everyday problems. Participants said that when local values serve as a foundation, leaders can guide the community toward digital change without sparking resistance or identity conflicts. In other words, local wisdom serves as a bridge between tradition and modernity, so that change is not perceived as a threat but as a natural process that strengthens the community.

Furthermore, leadership is not only understood as the dominance of formal figures, but also as a collective role that religious leaders, neighborhood association heads, MSME actors, and youth organizations can assume. These informal leaders have substantial social capital because of their daily closeness to the community. The results of PKM activities show that youth organizations have the potential to be changemakers who can positively influence their peers in the use of digital technology. They not only have technical skills but also an emotional closeness to the community, enabling them to become mediators in overcoming digital and social divides.

Thus, transformational leadership grounded in local wisdom can be a key strategy for maintaining social cohesion while helping villages enter the digital era with greater readiness and maturity. This leadership model helps the community understand that digital change is not incompatible with cultural values but can coexist harmoniously when accompanied by collective awareness and a shared vision.

Figure 1. Opening of the Pancasila Village PKM

Village Readiness for Value-Based Digitalization

The digital transformation in Pesanggrahan Village shows promising early signs of readiness. Although digital literacy is not yet widespread, residents are beginning to understand that technology can be used to improve public services, promote the village's potential, and create new economic opportunities. During training sessions, participants expressed a desire to use digital platforms to disseminate information about the town, particularly regarding administration, social activities, and MSME development. This shows an awareness that digitization is not merely a technical issue, but a matter of access to transparent and accountable information.

The potential for village digitalization became even more apparent when youth organizations showed interest in creating digital content that showcases local culture, community activities, and the village's tourism potential. This interest is an essential asset for the village, as the younger generation is familiar with technology and can adapt quickly.

However, digital readiness should not only be understood as the ability to use technology, but also as a process of building a value-based digital identity. The Pesanggrahan Village community understands that village digitalization must maintain the values of cooperation, openness, and social solidarity to preserve its identity.

The entire series of PKM activities shows that the village's readiness to enter the digital era must be pursued gradually, measured, and grounded in values. Technology can be a unifying or divisive tool, depending on how the community manages it. Therefore, digitization grounded in local values and transformative leadership is key to ensuring that digital innovation strengthens rather than undermines the village's social cohesion. With this awareness, Pesanggrahan Village has an excellent opportunity to become an example of a village that can manage modernity without being uprooted from its cultural roots.

Figure 2. Discussion session and closing of PKM activities

4. CONCLUSION

The Community Service (PKM) activities carried out in Pesanggrahan Village show that digital transformation at the village level is not just a matter of technology, but a complex social process involving the dynamics of inter-community relations, leadership capacity, and the strength of the community's cultural values. The findings and processes that emerged during the activity confirmed that village digitalization requires a much deeper foundation than just mastery of digital devices; it requires social resilience, information literacy skills, and transformational leadership capable of mobilizing all elements of society towards inclusive change.

In general, this activity revealed that the Pesanggrahan Village community is in a dynamic social context, where rapid modernization and the widespread use of digital media bring both positive impacts and significant challenges. On the one hand, access to technology opens new opportunities for the community to obtain information, expand social networks, and use digital platforms for communication and economic development. However, the rapid flow of unverified information presents the risk of misinformation, social polarization, and potential

intolerance, which can disrupt the village's social harmony. This phenomenon reinforces the argument that digital literacy is no longer just an additional skill but a basic need for rural communities in maintaining social cohesion in the digital age.

This PKM activity shows that digital literacy training directly increases residents' awareness of the importance of information verification, media ethics, and digital security. Participants began to understand that digital information has a real impact on inter-community relations. This awareness is the first step for rural communities to build stronger social resilience while preventing the formation of information spaces filled with prejudice, conflict, or political identity bias. Good digital literacy helps residents understand that technology is only a tool; what determines whether it becomes a unifying or divisive force is how the community manages it.

In addition to digital literacy, another critical factor that emerged from the PKM activities was the need for transformational leadership at the village level. Digital transformation will not be effective without leaders who can understand community needs, inspire residents to participate in the change process, and maintain social integrity by applying local values. Findings during the activities showed that community leaders, village officials, and youth organizations have great potential as agents of change. However, this potential can be optimally developed only if it is framed by a vision of transformational leadership that combines technology with respect for local culture.

In the context of Pesanggrahan Village, local values such as cooperation, deliberation, tolerance, and solidarity are firm social capital to support the digitization process. These values are not only characteristic of the village community but also serve as moral guidelines in overcoming social challenges arising from information openness. Discussions and seminars show that the community still upholds these values, which offer great hope that digital transformation can be carried out harmoniously if done with a value-based approach.

Another conclusion is that Pesanggrahan Village is sufficiently prepared to enter a more systematic stage of digitization. Residents' awareness of the benefits of technology is increasing, especially in village administration, publishing social activities, and promoting the village's potential. The village's younger generation shows great enthusiasm for using technology as a means of creative expression, to promote MSMEs, and to disseminate positive information. This initiative is an important asset to the village government in building an inclusive and sustainable digital ecosystem.

However, this readiness still requires ongoing support and capacity-building. Digital transformation should not be carried out instantly or technocratically, but rather through a

gradual approach that considers social conditions, residents' digital literacy levels, and alignment with existing cultural values. Continued assistance is needed to ensure that technology does not create new inequalities, but rather strengthens equal access, expands opportunities for participation, and improves the quality of village public services.

Overall, this PKM has made an important contribution to building digital awareness, strengthening social values, and preparing the Pesanggrahan Village community to face the challenges of the digital era. This activity also shows that digital transformation can only be successful if it is grounded in adequate digital literacy and visionary, adaptive leadership. The greatest strength of a village lies not in its technology but in its local culture, social solidarity, and collective will to change. By combining local wisdom and digital capabilities, Pesanggrahan Village has excellent potential to become a modern, inclusive, empowered village that remains rooted in the noble values that have shaped its identity.

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