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Strategies For Enhancing Human Resource Capacity To Support Digital Transformation In Pejala Village, Penajam District, Penajam Paser Utara Regency, East Kalimantan

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Abstract

This study aims to describe strategies for enhancing human resource (HR) capacity in supporting digital transformation, as well as to identify the obstacles and challenges encountered in its implementation in Pejala Village, Penajam District, Penajam Paser Utara Regency. The research was conducted at the Pejala Village Office using a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, and were then analyzed thematically to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. The findings reveal that strategies to enhance HR capacity were carried out through training, technical guidance, performance evaluation, utilization of digital applications, and support from the Department of Communication and Informatics. These efforts not only strengthened the skills of local officials but also encouraged the integration of digital-based public service systems that are faster, more efficient, and more accurate. However, several challenges remain, including limited competence of officials in operating technology, unstable internet networks, limited digital devices, low digital literacy among the community, and restricted village office budgets. These findings indicate that although digital transformation in Pejala Village has begun to progress well, the process still requires more targeted policy strengthening, adequate technological infrastructure provision, and continuous training based on the needs of local officials. Thus, digital transformation at the village level has the potential to support the improvement of public service quality to be more responsive, transparent, and accountable.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation in the public sector is a consequence of rapid advancements in information technology in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which requires governments to be more responsive, efficient, and adaptive. Digitalization is not limited to technological changes but also involves organizational culture and data-driven decision-making (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2015). The Government of Indonesia has responded through the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) policy as stipulated in Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018, which promotes the integration of administrative and public services through digital systems at all levels of government.

At the village administration level, digitalization is essential because the village office serves as the frontline of public services, particularly in population administration, financial management, and social services. However, the success of digital transformation depends not only on the availability of technological infrastructure but also on the readiness of human resources (HR). According to Ghamdi et al. (2019), the competence of local officials is a key factor in ensuring that digitalization is implemented effectively and sustainably.

Pejala Village, in Penajam District, Penajam Paser Utara Regency, is currently making efforts to adopt digital-based governance systems. Although it already possesses supporting hardware and software, implementation remains limited due to unequal distribution of device usage, lack of technical training, low digital literacy, and unstable internet connectivity. This situation reflects a gap between the availability of technology and the readiness of human resources.

Therefore, this study is important to describe strategies for enhancing HR capacity in supporting digital transformation, as well as to identify the obstacles and challenges faced by Pejala Village. The results are expected to provide practical strategic recommendations, not only for Pejala Village but also as a best practice model for other villages in Penajam Paser Utara Regency and similar regions across Indonesia.

2 Research Methods

2.1 Research Approach and Design

This study applies a descriptive qualitative case study in Pejala Village to examine strategies for enhancing human resource capacity in digital transformation. Data from interviews, observation, and documentation were thematically analyzed, highlighting processes, interactions, and challenges while providing contextual insights for sustainable capacity-building in local governance.

2.2 Researcher's Role

The role of this research is to provide an in-depth understanding of strategies for enhancing human resource capacity to support digital transformation at the village level. It contributes theoretically by enriching literature on digital governance and capacity building, and practically by offering insights for policymakers and local governments in designing context-based and sustainable strategies for improving public service delivery.

2.3 Research Site and Period

This research was conducted at the Pejala Village Office, located at Jln. Tanjung Jumlai RT. 05 No. 1, within Penajam District, North Penajam Paser Regency, East Kalimantan Province. The site was selected purposively, considering that Pejala Village represents a local government unit currently undergoing adaptation to digital transformation in public service delivery. Moreover, the location presents typical peripheral challenges, such as limited infrastructure, varying levels of human resource capacity, and restricted access to information technology, making it highly relevant for in-depth study. The study took place over a period of two months, from April to June 2025.

2.4 Data Sources

This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources**.**

2.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants were selected purposively based on their roles and involvement in digital transformation at the village level, with snowball sampling used when additional insights were needed. They included the village secretary (DS), heads of sections (SA, AM), staff members (AI, MS), a representative from the District Communication and Information Office (SL), and a local community leader (AMN). These informants were chosen for their direct engagement in administrative coordination, digital service implementation, human resource development, and as service recipients, thus providing diverse and relevant perspectives.

2.4.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from official documents and archives related to human resources, infrastructure, training, and existing digital transformation policies. These included: (a) the Pejala Village profile, (b) available hardware and software data, (c) employee training reports, (d) regulatory documents such as Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018 on the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE), and (e) digital transformation planning documents from local government or relevant agencies.

The use of secondary data served to complement and strengthen the findings derived from interviews and field observations. By combining both primary and secondary data

sources, the researcher is expected to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the current conditions as well as potential strategies for enhancing human resource capacity in Pejala Village.

2.5 Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study were collected through several methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, namely:

Data were collected naturalistically to obtain in-depth, comprehensive, and contextual information. Three main techniques were used: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary method to explore HR capacity, training, digital skills, challenges, and readiness, while allowing flexibility for informants' narratives (Yin, 2018). Observations were conducted to directly examine the use of technology, staff interactions with digital applications, and the work environment, providing contextual insights beyond interviews (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2018). Documentation, including employee profiles, training records, digitalization plans, IT inventories, and relevant policies, complemented and validated the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All three techniques were applied triangulatively to enhance credibility and minimize bias.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted inductively and simultaneously with data collection. The goal was to reduce, organize, and interpret qualitative data into meaningful findings. This study adopted Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2018) interactive model, consisting of three stages:

1. Data Reduction
   Selecting, simplifying, and categorizing interview, observation, and documentation data through coding, focusing only on information relevant to human resource capacity and digital transformation.
2. Data Display
   Presenting reduced data in descriptive narratives, tables, or diagrams to reveal patterns and relationships.
3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification
   Developing tentative conclusions throughout the process, continuously testing them against new data, and applying triangulation to ensure validity.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Results

3.1.1 Demographics

3.1.1.1 Population

Population size is one of the key indicators in assessing regional development. The population growth in Pejala Village shows a positive trend each year, for both males and females.

Table 4.1 Population

Description	Last Year	This Year	Growth (%)
Male	559 people	586 people	4.83%
Female	519 people	565 people	8.86%

Source: Pejala Village Profile Data 2025

The female population increased at a higher rate compared to males. Overall, the population of Pejala continues to show positive growth annually.

3.1.1.2 Number of Households

In addition to population, another indicator is the number of households (KK). Household data reflects the number of families and the level of family independence in a region.

Table 4.2 Number of Households

Description	2024	2025	Growth (%)
Male-headed households	268	282	5.22%
Female-headed households	77	80	3.9%
Total Households	345	362	-

Source: Household Data 2025

The number of households increased from 345 to 362, in line with overall population growth.

3.1.1.3 Economic Conditions of the Community

3.1.1.3.1 Workforce and Employment

The economic condition of the community can be seen from the size of the workforce and the distribution of productive-age residents. In Pejala, the productive-age population is relatively large, though many are still in school or engaged in domestic roles as housewives.

Table 4.3 Workforce and Employment

Description	**Number**
Workforce (18–56 years)	303 people
Still in school & unemployed	313 people
Housewives	203 people
Fully employed	82 people
Irregular employment	40 people
Disabled & unemployed	0
Disabled & employed	0

Source: Pejala Village Profile Data 2025

Although the productive-age population is large, only a small portion (82 people) are fully employed. Most are either still in school or working as housewives.

3.1.1.3.2 Family Welfare Level

Family welfare is an important indicator of quality of life.

Table 4.4 Family Welfare Levels

Category	Number
Pre-prosperous	113 families
Prosperous I	157 families
Prosperous II	264 families
Prosperous III	41 families
Prosperous III Plus	11 families
Total	586 families

Source: Pejala Village Profile Data 2025

Most families fall into the Prosperous II category (264 families). However, 113 families remain in the pre-prosperous category and need support to improve their welfare.

3.1.1.4 Education of the Community

Education is a key factor in improving human resource quality. Educational attainment in Pejala shows dominance at the primary an secondary school levels.

Table 4.5 Education Levels

Education Level	Number
Illiterate	0
Ages 3–6 in Kindergarten/PAUD	78
Currently in Primary School	148
Completed Primary School	332
Did not finish Primary School	10
Currently in Junior High School	72
Completed Junior High School	151
Currently in Senior High School	73
Completed Senior High School	201
Completed Diploma (D-2)	18
Completed Bachelor's Degree (S-1)	38

Source: Pejala Village Profile Data 2025

The majority of residents completed only primary (SD) or secondary (SLTA) education. Higher education graduates are still very limited, with only 38 residents holding a bachelor's degree (S-1). This highlights the need to improve access to advanced education to enhance human resource quality.

1. Strategies for Strengthening Human Resource Capacity in Supporting Digital Transformation

The interviews reveal that digital transformation at the village government level, particularly in Kelurahan Pejala, requires more than just adequate technological infrastructure. The readiness and competence of human resources (HR) play a decisive role in ensuring the success of digital-based public services.

The first strategy for capacity development focuses on continuous training and technical guidance. According to the Village Secretary and other officials, training activities are conducted internally and in collaboration with relevant agencies such as the Department of Communication and Information (Kominfo). These efforts aim to equip staff with the

technical skills necessary to operate digital governance applications.

The second aspect emphasizes the mastery of digital applications as the primary tool for administrative services. Informants highlighted that when staff understand how to operate applications effectively, public services become faster, more accurate, and more efficient. This shows that technical competence directly impacts service quality.

The third element involves collaboration, both internally across different divisions within the village office and externally with Kominfo. Internal collaboration enhances efficiency through knowledge sharing, while external support provides digital literacy programs, mentoring for application implementation, and the improvement of internet infrastructure.

The fourth strategy includes engaging the community, particularly local leaders such as RT/RW, in socialization activities related to digital programs. Community participation ensures broader acceptance of digital services and increases public awareness of new systems.

Despite these efforts, several challenges remain. Limited infrastructure, unstable internet connections, inadequate equipment, and insufficient training based on staff needs are obstacles frequently mentioned by informants. There is also a skills gap among employees, as many training programs remain general rather than tailored to specific job requirements.

Nevertheless, all informants agreed that the key to accelerating digital transformation lies in individual readiness. Both civil servants (ASN) and non-ASN staff must adapt to technological developments to ensure that innovations in public service bring real benefits.

In conclusion, the strategy for strengthening HR capacity in Kelurahan Pejala combines training, technical mentoring, the use of digital applications, routine evaluation, community involvement, and external support. These integrated efforts are expected to optimize digital transformation and improve the quality, speed, and efficiency of public service delivery.

2. Barriers and Challenges in Strengthening Human Resource Capacity for Digital Transformation

The interviews with various informants highlight that the implementation of digital transformation in Kelurahan Pejala is shaped by both internal and external challenges that affect its effectiveness.

From the internal perspective, the most pressing issue is the limited competence of human resources. Several staff members, as noted by the Village Secretary, struggle to adapt to new technologies and applications. This lack of readiness hampers service delivery and slows down decision-making. Moreover, some employees are still anxious about being replaced by digital systems, which affects their willingness to adapt. On the other hand, coordination among units is relatively strong, minimizing organizational conflicts in adopting digital systems.

The external challenges primarily stem from the low digital literacy of the community. As emphasized by the Head of PM-KESSOS, many residents, especially elderly people and those in rural areas, find it difficult to access or use digital services. This lack of readiness reduces the inclusivity of digital transformation and creates a digital divide between different segments of the population.

From the technical perspective, unstable internet connections, limited devices, and occasional power outages are recurrent problems faced by both structural officials and operational staff. These issues directly disrupt the smooth delivery of digital services. Furthermore, outdated or misaligned regulations and limited budgets exacerbate the problem, slowing down the adoption of digital infrastructure and capacity-building programs.

Despite these obstacles, the interviews also reveal positive attitudes and supportive measures. Most staff members welcome digitalization, recognizing that it simplifies their

tasks and improves efficiency. Additionally, the support from the Department of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo), in the form of training, mentoring, and system development assistance, provides significant reinforcement for the village government. However, Kominfo's reach is still constrained by financial and infrastructure limitations, especially in remote areas.

In terms of solutions, the informants proposed several key strategies:

1. Intensive digital literacy training for staff to enhance adaptability and reduce resistance.
2. Strengthening infrastructure and device provision, supported by aligned government policies and budgets.
3. Practical contingency measures, such as providing backup power generators, to ensure service continuity during power failures.

In summary, the analysis indicates that while digital transformation in Kelurahan Pejala is well-received, its sustainability depends heavily on improving human resource capacity, strengthening infrastructure, ensuring policy alignment, and securing sufficient funding. Collaborative efforts between local government, Kominfo, and the community are essential to achieving effective and inclusive digital governance.

3.1 Discussion

3.1.1 Strategies for Strengthening Human Resource Capacity in Supporting Digital Transformation

Based on the findings, the strategy to strengthen human resource (HR) capacity in Pejala Village has been carried out gradually and in stages. Village officials emphasized the importance of training, technical guidance, and mentoring as the main steps in equipping staff with digital skills. Key informants explained that training, either organized internally or in collaboration with relevant local government agencies, served as an essential instrument to enhance staff competencies. This finding aligns with Yunas, Susanto, and Kuswandoro (2024), who showed that workshops and digital training at the village level accelerate adaptation to electronic-based governance. However, while Yunas et al. focused more on digital leadership, in Pejala the emphasis lies on improving technical skills among staff.

Another key strategy involves the use of digital applications in administrative services, which directly improves work efficiency. Government and administrative staff reported that digital platforms speed up administrative tasks, reduce manual processes, and increase data accuracy. This highlights that strengthening HR capacity is not only about training but also about hands-on experience with technology in public services. This supports Sulmiah's (2023) study in Makassar City, which found that digital systems expedite personnel data processing but require skilled staff for optimal results. Thus, both in Makassar and Pejala, digital applications play a central role in simplifying bureaucracy.

Capacity strengthening also involves routine evaluations and encouraging staff participation in planning and implementing programs. Cross-departmental collaboration within the village shows synergy that supports digital transformation. This is reinforced by the external role of the Communication and Information Agency (Kominfo), which provides technical assistance, digital literacy programs, and access to digital systems. This resonates with Hadi Sutrisno and Sunaryo (2023), who argued that HR development strategies in Sampang Regency must include planning, implementation, and evaluation involving all departments to ensure organizational integrity. In Pejala, regular weekly and monthly coordination meetings serve as a form of such evaluation.

The study also found that community members, such as neighborhood leaders (RT/RW), were engaged through digitalization outreach programs. This indicates that HR capacity strategies extend not only to government officials but also to service recipients, so that digital adaptation can be

more inclusive. This supports Jatmoko, Primartadi, and Murhadi (2024), who showed that village website-based regulations increase transparency and digital literacy among citizens. However, while Jatmoko et al. observed systematic web-based practices, in Pejala community involvement remains participatory and limited to outreach and small-scale training.

Overall, the findings indicate that HR capacity strengthening in Pejala Village is carried out through a combination of training, technology adoption, performance evaluation, internal collaboration, and external support from Kominfo. These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasized the importance of digital literacy, need-based training, and integration of technology into bureaucracy. The key distinction, however, lies in the scale: while most prior studies focused on the district or national level, this research illustrates real conditions at the village level, with its unique resource constraints.

3.1.2 Barriers and Challenges in Strengthening Human Resource Capacity for Digital Transformation

The study found that efforts to strengthen human resource (HR) capacity for digital transformation in Pejala Village face several barriers and challenges. A major issue, as highlighted by the Village Secretary and staff, is the limited ability of personnel to adapt to new technologies. Some employees are still unfamiliar with digital systems, slowing down service delivery. This reflects Faidz and Kuswinarno (2023), who noted that resistance to change and low digital literacy hinder competency development among public officials. However, while their study emphasized organizational culture, in Pejala the challenge is more technical, focusing on the practical skills of staff.

Technical factors such as unstable internet connectivity, application system errors, and limited digital equipment were also frequently reported. Staff noted that poor internet access significantly affects public service delivery, while power outages further disrupt digital processes. These findings align with Maryuni et al. (2024), who studied SPBE-based digital transformation in Kubu Raya and found infrastructure and funding as key barriers. Unlike their district-level focus, this study highlights the direct impact of technical limitations at the village level.

On the community side, low digital literacy, particularly among the elderly and rural populations, presents another challenge. This reduces participation in digital services, requiring additional support from officials to ensure effective service delivery. This echoes Yunas, Susanto, and Kuswandoro (2024), who emphasized the need for digital literacy not only for officials but also for citizens. The difference lies in focus: in Pejala, digital literacy issues are most prominent among older residents, while Yunas et al. emphasized the role of digital leadership among officials.

Budget constraints also emerged as a recurring obstacle. Limited funding makes it difficult to procure digital equipment or organize regular training. While Kominfo provides some support, it is selective and depends on county-level budget priorities. This is consistent with Fauziah, Ivrantika, and Firmansyah (2021), who found that government digital talent programs often face funding gaps and discontinuity. However, whereas their study focused on national re-skilling and up-skilling, this study highlights local, practical budget limitations.

Nevertheless, informants proposed solutions such as intensive training, improving digital literacy, adding equipment, and providing generators to mitigate power issues. Policy recommendations also pointed to the need for stronger infrastructure and regulatory alignment to make digital transformation more effective. This resonates with Adila and Putri (2024), who found that HR digital governance requires training, infrastructure, and policy alignment for responsive and efficient bureaucracy. Unlike their national policy

analysis, this study underscores practical solutions at the village level.

In conclusion, the barriers and challenges in strengthening HR capacity in Pejala Village include limited staff competencies, technical constraints, budget shortages, low community digital literacy, and regulatory misalignment. However, with Kominfo's support, internal collaboration, and practical solutions from informants, these obstacles can be gradually addressed through proper policies and sustainable capacity-building strategies. This is consistent with prior research emphasizing HR readiness, adequate infrastructure, and policy support as key drivers of successful digital transformation in the public sector.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Summary of Findings

This study concludes that digital transformation in Pejala Village has been implemented progressively through a combination of strategies emphasizing training, technical guidance, performance evaluation, community involvement, and institutional collaboration. The human resource (HR) capacity-building process is supported by the local government and the Department of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo), resulting in improved efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness in digital public services. However, challenges remain in the form of limited digital competence among village officials, inadequate infrastructure, unstable internet networks, low community digital literacy, and restricted budgets. These challenges indicate that successful digital transformation at the village level requires not only technological adaptation but also a sustained human capital development framework and policy alignment to support long-term capacity building.

4.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the discourse on digital governance and human resource development in local government contexts. It affirms that human resources are not merely executors of digital transformation but also the main drivers of its sustainability. The findings extend existing models of digital transformation (Bharadwaj et al., 2013; Mergel et al., 2019) by highlighting the micro-level dynamics of human resource adaptation in small administrative units such as villages.

Practically, the study provides insights for policymakers and practitioners in regional governance. Strengthening HR capacity through continuous training, need-based mentoring, and inter-institutional collaboration should be prioritized in the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). Furthermore, it underscores the need for infrastructure investment and inclusive digital literacy programs for both staff and citizens. For local governments, the findings emphasize the importance of integrating HR planning with digital infrastructure development to ensure effective public service transformation.

4.3 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by its single-site case study design, which may not fully capture the diverse contexts of digital transformation across other villages or regions in Indonesia. The qualitative approach, while providing depth, restricts generalizability and quantitative measurement of HR capacity outcomes. Additionally, the study period was relatively short, so long-term impacts of training and policy interventions were not observed. Future studies may address these limitations by using mixed methods, longitudinal data, or comparative analyses across multiple administrative regions to strengthen empirical generalization.

4.4 Recommendations and Future Research Directions

Based on the findings and identified limitations, several recommendations are proposed:

1. **For Village Government:** Implement continuous and need-based training programs focusing on practical digital skills and performance evaluation.
2. **For Kominfo and Local Authorities:** Expand digital infrastructure and provide inclusive literacy programs that reach both staff and the broader community.
3. **For Policymakers:** Integrate human resource development into digital governance planning through adequate budget allocation and regulation support.
4. **For Future Research:** Scholars are encouraged to explore comparative studies between digitally advanced and developing villages to identify replicable best practices. Furthermore, quantitative assessments of HR performance before and after digital training interventions could enrich the literature on public sector capacity building.

In conclusion, the digital transformation of Pejala Village demonstrates that technology adoption must go hand in hand with continuous human resource empowerment. Sustainable transformation will only occur when technological innovation is aligned with human capability, organizational learning, and adaptive governance frameworks.

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