

Archives as Agents of Change in Digital Transformation: Archives as a Catalyst For Bureaucratic Reform in The Era of Digital Government

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Abstract, This research aims to analyse the role of archives as agents of change in the digital transformation of archives and as catalysts for bureaucratic reform in the era of digital government at the Sorong City Regional Secretariat. The research used a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey of 30 respondents with in-depth interviews with five key informants, and analysed the data using correlation statistics and thematic analysis. The study's results show that the digital transformation of archives is closely linked to bureaucratic reform and digital governance, and qualitative findings confirm that digitisation improves administrative efficiency, data integration, and organisational accountability. The research highlights the importance of strengthening technological infrastructure, integrating information systems, and improving the competence of the apparatus as prerequisites for the success of the digital transformation of archives. This study has limitations in its scope, involving only one local government agency and a relatively small number of respondents. Therefore, further research is recommended to broaden the scope, incorporate public service quality variables, and use a longitudinal design to examine the long-term impact of archive digitisation on the performance of bureaucratic reform and digital governance more comprehensively. These findings also provide practical contributions for local governments in designing integrated, sustainable electronic archive management policies that support effective, transparent, and responsive public services to meet the needs of modern society in the future, as well as strengthening data-driven governance.

Keywords: Archives As Agents Of Change, Bureaucratic Reform, Digital Government, Digital Transformation Of Archives, Public Services.

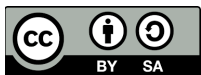
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1. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of government is a national strategic agenda directed at increasing bureaucratic effectiveness, strengthening accountability, and improving the quality of public services. The Government of Indonesia, through the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) policy, emphasises the importance of integrating information technology in all government administration processes, including the management of electronic archives as part of the government information infrastructure (Ministry of PANRB, 2022). Archives are no longer understood simply as administrative documents, but as a strategic source of information that plays a role in supporting decision-making, transparency, and the sustainability of the memory of state institutions (International Council on Archives, 2016). Therefore, strengthening the digital archiving system is an important part of bureaucratic reform efforts towards an effective and responsive digital government.

Nationally, various government agencies have begun to implement electronic archive management systems to improve administrative efficiency and the quality of public services. Digital archives enable the quick, systematic recording, storage, and tracing of documents, supporting the smooth delivery of administrative services to the community (Saffady, 2019). In the context of public services, the availability of well-documented information is an important factor in ensuring the speed, accuracy, and accountability of services (Osborne, 2010). Thus, the success of bureaucratic digital transformation depends heavily on the

readiness of an archival system to support organisational information needs in an integrated manner.

In the regional context, the implementation of digital transformation of archives still faces various challenges, including in Sorong City. As one of the strategic cities in Eastern Indonesia, Sorong City plays an important role in delivering public services at the regional level. The Sorong City Regional Secretariat, a regional apparatus responsible for coordinating government administration, plays a central role in managing documents, correspondence, and regional policy archives. Effective archive management greatly determines the smooth coordination between the regional apparatus and the quality of administrative services to the community. Therefore, the digital transformation of archives within the Sorong City Regional Secretariat is an important factor in improving the quality of public services through digital government.

However, empirical evidence shows a gap between the government administration's digitalisation policy and its implementation at the regional level. In Sorong City, there are still problems with manual archive management, limited integration in electronic archive systems across work units, and uneven competence among personnel in managing digital archives. This condition causes the document tracing process to take a relatively long time; often, administrative data is not fully integrated, and the use of archives as a strategic source of information in decision-making is not optimal. This phenomenon indicates an implementation gap between digital transformation policies and archive management practices at the local government level.

Theoretically, the digital transformation of archives can be explained through change management theory, which emphasises that the success of organisational change is highly determined by system readiness, human resources, and leadership commitment in implementing administrative innovation (Kotter, 2012). The transition from a manual archive system to a digital archive is an organisational transformation that requires adjusting work procedures, increasing system capacity, and strengthening the information technology infrastructure. In addition, the theory of digital governance explains that the effectiveness of digital governance is highly dependent on the integration of data and information that support administrative processes and public services efficiently and transparently (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013). In this perspective, digital archives serve as a foundation of information that allows government organisations to carry out coordination, service, and decision-making functions more effectively.

The relationship between concepts in this study can be understood as follows: archives, as agents of change, play a role in encouraging the digital transformation of archives, which in turn catalyses bureaucratic reform. Digital-based bureaucratic reform will have an impact on improving the quality of public services because the administrative process becomes faster, more transparent, and more accountable. Thus, there is a conceptual relationship among archives as agents of change, the digital transformation of archives, bureaucratic reform, and the improvement of public service quality within the framework of digital government (Heeks, 2018).

Several previous studies have shown that the use of electronic archives improves the efficiency of government administration. However, most research still focuses on central or regional government agencies with relatively advanced technological infrastructure (Putra & Handayani, 2021). Other research emphasises the importance of human resource competence in the successful implementation of digital archive management. However, it has not specifically examined the role of archives as agents of change in regional bureaucratic reform (Rahmawati, 2020). In addition, studies on the digital transformation of archives in Eastern Indonesia remain relatively limited. Hence, few examine in depth the relationship between archival digitisation and the improvement of public services in local governments in the region. This condition indicates a research gap that warrants further study.

Sorong City was chosen as the research site because it is a major centre of government and public services in Southwest Papua, which has a strong need for an effective, integrated administrative system. The Sorong City Regional Secretariat, as a government administrative coordination centre, maintains a large volume of documents and plays a strategic role in supporting regional policymaking. Strengthening the agency's digital archiving system is expected to significantly improve the effectiveness of government administration and the quality of public services. Therefore, research on the role of archives as agents of change in the digital transformation of the Sorong City Regional Secretariat is important to conduct.

Based on this description, the main problem of this research is how archive management can serve as an agent of change in encourage the digital transformation of archives, supporting bureaucratic reform and improving the quality of public services. Thus, the major question of this research is: what is the role of archives as agents of change in the digital transformation of archives, and as catalysts for bureaucratic reform in the era of digital government in the Sorong City Regional Secretariat? Based on this question, this research was formulated in the title: "Archives as Agents of Change in Digital Transformation: Archives as a Catalyst for Bureaucratic Reform in the Era of Digital Government (Study on the Regional Secretariat of Sorong City)."

Theoretical Studies

Change Management Theory

Change Management Theory describes how organisations plan, manage, and implement change to achieve conditions that are more effective and adaptive to a dynamic environment. According to John P. Kotter, successful organisational change requires a systematic sequence: creating urgency for change, forming leadership coalitions, preparing a vision for change, communicating the vision, and strengthening the change in organisational culture (Kotter, 2012). In the context of public organisations, change is not only about transforming organisational structures but also about changes in work processes, administrative systems, and the mindset of the government apparatus.

In the era of government digital transformation, this theory is relevant because the digitisation of archives is part of organisational change that requires technological readiness, human resource competence, and institutional policy support. The implementation of the electronic archive system is not only technical, but also requires changes in the work behaviour of the apparatus in managing information in a digital, transparent, and integrated manner. Therefore, the success of archival digital transformation depends heavily on effective change management strategies, including staff training, strengthening internal regulations, and organisational leaders' commitment. Thus, change management theory provides a conceptual foundation for understanding how archives can function as agents of change in driving digital-based bureaucratic reform (Burnes, 2017; Kotter, 2012).

E-Government / Digital Governance Theory

The theory of E-Government, or Digital Governance, describes the use of information and communication technology in government administration to improve administrative efficiency, transparency, public participation, and the quality of public services. Digital governance not only focuses on the digitisation of services but also on the integration of information systems, government data management, and the transformation of bureaucratic work processes as a whole (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013). In this framework, data and information become strategic assets that determine the quality of government decision-making.

The management of electronic archives is one of the fundamental elements in the implementation of digital governance because archives function as official data sources that support administrative processes and public services. Without an integrated digital archiving system, implementing digital governance will face obstacles in data coordination, document tracking, and administrative accountability. Therefore, digital governance places information management systems, including electronic archives, at the core of modern governance (Heeks, 2018). In this perspective, the digital transformation of archives plays a role as an information infrastructure that allows the realisation of bureaucratic reform and the improvement of the quality of public services based on digital technology.

Concept Development

Digital Transformation of Archives

Archival digital transformation is the process of changing the archive management system from a conventional paper-based method to an electronic archive system that utilises information technology in the creation, storage, management, and search of archives (Saffady, 2019). This transformation is not only about document digitisation but also includes changes in work procedures, information management standards, and the integration of the archival system with the organisation's administrative system. With a digital filing system, organisations can enhance data storage efficiency, speed up document searches, and improve the security and sustainability of organisational information.

In the context of government, the digital transformation of archives has an important role in supporting bureaucratic reform because archives are the main source of information used in the decision-making process, policy evaluation, and public services. The digital archive system enables faster, more accurate data exchange between organisational units, thereby improving government administrative coordination.

In addition, the digital transformation of archives is closely related to the concept of digital government, as the availability of electronically documented data is the foundation for implementing technology-based public services. Thus, the digital transformation of archives has a strong conceptual relationship with archives as agents of change, bureaucratic reform, and digital government as a framework for modern governance (International Council on Archives, 2016).

Archives as Agents of Change

The concept of archives as agents of change places them not only as administrative documents but also as strategic instruments that can drive organisational change toward more transparent, efficient, and accountable governance. Archives provide historical and administrative information needed in the process of policy evaluation, decision-making, and improvement of the quality of public services (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003). In this perspective, good archive management can create a data- and information-based work culture that encourages organisational innovation.

As an agent of change, the modern archival system accelerates the digital transformation of the bureaucracy by enabling the systematic integration of data and information. Well-documented electronic records help organisations reduce reliance on manual procedures, improve work efficiency, and strengthen administrative accountability.

This concept is closely related to the digital transformation of archives, as archival digitisation is the primary prerequisite for archives to function as an instrument of organisational change. In addition, archives serve as agents of change, supporting bureaucratic reform and the implementation of digital government, as systematically documented data enable public services to be carried out more quickly, transparently, and based on accurate information (Heeks, 2018).

Bureaucratic Reform

Bureaucratic reform is the process of updating the government administration system to improve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in government performance (Osborne, 2010). This reform includes changes to the organisational structure, simplification of administrative procedures, improvements in the quality of human resources, and the use of information technology in the bureaucratic process. In the era of digital government, bureaucratic reform is increasingly directed at digitising public services and integrating government information systems.

One important factor in the success of bureaucratic reform is the availability of a structured, integrated information management system, including a digital archiving system. Electronically documented archives enable administrative processes to be carried out more quickly and accurately, thereby improving the quality of public services. Therefore, bureaucratic reform has a close relationship with the digital transformation of archives because the digitisation of archives is one of the main instruments in improving the efficiency of governance. In addition, bureaucratic reform is related to the concept of digital government, as the modernisation of information technology-based government administration is an important part of efforts to improve the quality of public services and government accountability (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013).

Digital Government

Digital government is a concept of government administration that utilises information and communication technology in an integrated manner to improve the quality of public services, administrative transparency, and community participation in government processes (Heeks, 2018). Digital government not only focuses on digitising services but also on transforming bureaucratic work processes, integrating government data, and strengthening information-based governance. With a digital government system, the administrative process can be carried out faster, more accurately, and efficiently because an integrated information system supports it.

The success of digital government implementation depends heavily on the availability of systematically managed data and information, including through a digital archiving system. Electronic archives serve as official data sources that support decision-making processes,

administrative coordination, and the provision of technology-based public services. Therefore, the concept of digital government is closely related to the digital transformation of archives, archives as agents of change, and bureaucratic reform.

The digital transformation of archives provides information infrastructure; archives as agents of change encourage organisational adaptation; and bureaucratic reform becomes a policy framework that enables effective and sustainable digital governance (International Council on Archives, 2016; Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of archives as agents of change in the digital transformation of archives and bureaucratic reform. The mixed-methods approach was chosen because it integrates numerical and narrative data to produce a more in-depth, complementary analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The quantitative approach was implemented by distributing questionnaires to respondents involved in administrative and archival management within the Sorong City Regional Secretariat. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to characterise patterns in respondents' answers and correlation analysis to examine relationships among the digital transformation of archives, archives as agents of change, bureaucratic reform, and digital government. This analysis aims to identify the level of correlation between research variables empirically (Sugiyono, 2019).

The qualitative approach was carried out through in-depth interviews with key speakers, namely the Head of the Sorong City Archives Service, the Regional Secretary of Sorong City, the Head of the Communication and Information Service, the Head of the Organisation Section of the Regional Secretariat, and the Head of the General Section of the Regional Secretariat. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to the implementation of digital transformation in archives, and triangulation of sources was used to improve data validity by comparing information across sources (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The research is conducted at the Sorong City Regional Secretariat because this agency plays a strategic role in coordinating local government administration and managing policy documents. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive empirical picture of the contribution of archive management in supporting bureaucratic reform through digital government.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis in this study aims to examine the empirical relationships among the research variables: the digital transformation of archives, archives as agents of change, bureaucratic reform, and digital governance. The test was conducted using statistical correlation analysis to objectively and quantitatively identify the strength and direction of the relationship between variables.

Table. 1 Correlation Matrix.

	Digital Transformation of Archives	Archives as agents of change	Bureaucratic Reform	Digital Governance
Digital Transformation of Archives	1	,798	,885	.878
Archives as agents of change	,798	1	.748	.671
Bureaucratic Reform	,885	.748	1	,712
Digital Governance	.878	.671	,712	1

***. Correlation at 0.001(2-tailed)

The results of the correlation analysis showed that all study variables had a positive and significant relationship at a significance level of 0.001 ($p < 0.001$), which means that an increase in one variable followed an increase in another variable. The strongest correlation was between Archival Digital Transformation and Bureaucratic Reform, with $r = 0.885$, indicating

a very strong relationship. This indicates that the better the implementation of archival digitisation, the greater the effectiveness of the resulting bureaucratic reform.

Furthermore, the Digital Transformation of Archives is strongly related to Digital Government ($r = 0.878$) and to Archives as Agents of Change ($r = 0.798$). These findings confirm that the digitisation of the archive system plays an important role in driving the transformation of technology-based governance. Meanwhile, the relationship between Archives as Agents of Change and Bureaucratic Reform showed a strong correlation ($r = 0.748$), indicating that the presence of an adaptive archival system contributes to changes in government organisations.

The relationship between Archives as Agents of Change and Digital Government ($r = 0.671$) and between Bureaucratic Reform and Digital Government ($r = 0.712$) was also relatively strong. Overall, these results show that the digital transformation of archives is a strategic factor that is interrelated with bureaucratic reform and strengthening digital governance in an integrated manner.

Qualitative Analysis

The results of the qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviews with five resource persons indicate that the digital transformation of archives at the Sorong City Regional Secretariat is a gradual, organisational change process influenced by organisational readiness, human resource capacity, and support for technological infrastructure. In general, all speakers have a consistent perception that archival digitisation is not just a technical change in administration, but an institutional strategy that plays a role in strengthening the effectiveness of local governance.

From an organisational readiness perspective, qualitative findings indicate that leadership commitment is the primary driver in the implementation of the electronic archive system. Internal policy support, the preparation of digitally based operational standards for procedures, and the strengthening of coordination between work units are important indicators in creating an organisational environment that is adaptive to technological change. However, several speakers emphasised that organisational readiness still faces challenges in the form of limited application system integration and differences in the level of readiness between work units, so a more coordinated and sustainable transformation policy is needed.

From a human resources perspective, the interview results show that the apparatus's digital competence significantly influences the effectiveness of implementing digital archives. Apparatus that have participated in archival information system training tend to adapt to digital work procedures faster and make optimal use of electronic archive systems. On the other hand, the limitation of digital literacy in some employees causes the adaptation process to run more slowly, especially in work units that previously relied heavily on manual administration systems. Therefore, continuous training, technical assistance, and strengthening a technology-based work culture are strategic needs in supporting the success of the digital transformation of archives.

In addition to organisational and human resource factors, qualitative analysis shows that the availability of information technology infrastructure and the integration of data systems among regional apparatuses are determining factors for the success of digital archive implementation. Resource persons from the information technology sector emphasised that strengthening the network, developing integrated digital platforms, and interoperability of government applications are important prerequisites in ensuring that the electronic archive system can function optimally. Without adequate system integration, the benefits of digitising archives in supporting administrative coordination and organisational decision-making cannot be effectively maximised.

Regarding the impact of implementation, all speakers emphasised that digital archives have made real improvements in administrative efficiency, particularly in the recording, distribution of letters, and tracing of documents. Work processes that previously took a relatively long time can be carried out more quickly and systematically, thereby accelerating coordination between work units and supporting a more responsive decision-making process. In addition, electronically stored archival documentation strengthens organisational accountability because each document can be traced systematically and thoroughly.

Overall, the qualitative analysis shows that the digital transformation of archives serves as an instrument of organisational change that supports bureaucratic reform and the implementation of digital governance. However, the sustainability of this transformation requires strengthening leadership commitments, improving the digital competence of the apparatus, integrating government information systems, and consistent institutional policies

so that the digital archiving system can function optimally as the foundation of efficient, transparent, and accountable governance.

Discussion

Triangulation Analysis and Interpretation of Quantitative–Qualitative Data

Based on the integration of quantitative survey results and analysis of interview transcripts from resource persons in research on the digital transformation of archives at the Sorong City Regional Secretariat, a triangulation method was employed to ensure the consistency and validity of the empirical findings. The results of triangulation showed a correspondence between the tendency of statistical data and the narrative of the resource person's experience. The findings are further grouped into three main themes as follows.

Organisational Readiness in Archival Digital Transformation

Organisational readiness reflects the extent to which institutional structures, internal regulations, and resources are prepared to adopt technological change. The quantitative data indicated a level of readiness in the medium-to-high category, while the interviews confirmed that leadership commitment is the main driver in the transformation process. These findings align with the research of Mergel, Edelmann, and Haug (2019), who stated that organisational readiness is the main factor in the success of government digital transformation. Transformational leadership plays an important role in driving change in work culture towards a digitally based system. The resource person stated that the leadership's support directly accelerates the implementation of the electronic archive system in the organisation. This is in line with the view of Kotter (2012), who affirms that change leadership is a key factor in the success of organisational reform.

Human Resource Capacity and Digital Competence

Digital competence includes the technical ability to operate the electronic archive system and an understanding of the procedures for managing digital archives. Quantitative data show variation in employees' competency levels, while interview results confirm the need for capacity building through continuous training programs. This finding is in line with Ng's (2012) research, which states that the digital competence of the apparatus is the main determinant of the success of the implementation of e-government.

Continuous training is needed to ensure the apparatus can adapt to changes in technology-based administrative systems. The resource person said that routine training increases technical understanding and employee confidence in using digital systems. This is supported by research by Noe, Clarke, and Klein (2014), which shows that continuous training improves organisational performance in the face of technological change.

The Impact of Digital Archive Transformation on Bureaucratic Reform

Administrative efficiency is reflected in the acceleration of the document search process, the reduction of manual procedures, and the increase in the speed of coordination between work units. Quantitative data showed an increase in work efficiency, while the interview narrative confirmed that the digital archive system made it easier to manage and distribute documents. This finding is in line with Saffady's (2019) research, which states that electronic filing systems can improve the efficiency of organisational document management.

Digitisation of archives also increases the transparency of services because information can be accessed more systematically, documented, and easily traced. The interview results show that implementing digital archives increases administrative accountability and reduces the risk of document loss. This is in line with the view of Heeks (2018), who emphasises that digital information management is the main foundation of transparency in digital government. The results of interviews with five speakers show that the digital transformation of archives within the Sorong City Government is progressing gradually and is an integral part of bureaucratic reform efforts and the strengthening of digital governance. In general, all speakers share the view that archive digitisation is a strategic need to improve administrative efficiency, government data integration, and the quality of public services.

The first findings indicate that archive management is still in transition from a manual to an electronic system. The Archives Office emphasized that electronic archive governance has been developed at the regional level. However, implementation has not been evenly distributed due to limitations in technological infrastructure and human resource capacity. This shows that organisational readiness, both in terms of technology and apparatus capacity, is still an important factor in accelerating the digital transformation of archives.

The second finding relates to the role of archives as agents of organisational change. The Regional Secretary emphasised that strengthening the digital archive system can improve the effectiveness of administrative coordination between the regional apparatus and accelerate decision-making. This view is strengthened by the Secretariat's Organisation Section, which states that good archive management is an important indicator in supporting accountability for organisational performance because archives are evidence of the implementation of government policies and activities. Thus, the digitisation of archives not only has an impact on the technical aspects of administration but also on increasing transparency and accountability of the bureaucracy.

The third finding shows that information technology infrastructure and system integration are key in implementing digital governance. The Communication and Informatics Office explained that strengthening the network and developing integrated digital platforms are ongoing efforts to support data integration across regional devices. However, the main challenge that remains is the lack of optimal application integration and varying levels of digital literacy across the apparatus. This indicates that the success of archival digitisation depends heavily on the synergy between technological development and human resource capacity building.

The fourth finding shows that the implementation of digital archives has had a real impact on administrative efficiency. The General Section of the Regional Secretariat stated that using the electronic archive system makes it easier to record and distribute letters and trace old documents, thereby speeding up and streamlining administrative processes. However, the resource person also emphasised the need to adjust work procedures and employee training to ensure the use of digital systems runs optimally.

Overall, the interview results show that the Sorong City Government's digital transformation of its archives has contributed to improved administrative efficiency, strengthened organisational accountability, and supported the implementation of digital governance. However, the sustainability of this transformation still requires strengthening technological infrastructure, improving the competence of the apparatus, integrating information systems between regional apparatus, and consistent internal policy support so that archives can truly function as agents of change in regional bureaucratic reform.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that archives play a significant role as agents of change in encouraging the digital transformation of archives and serving as a catalyst for bureaucratic reform in the era of digital government. Answering the research question, digitised archive management has been shown to strengthen administrative efficiency, improve data integration across work units, and support transparency and accountability in public services. Quantitative findings show a strong correlation between the digital transformation of archives, archives as agents of change, bureaucratic reform, and digital government, while interview results confirm that archive digitisation accelerates administrative processes, facilitates decision-making, and improves the quality of organisational coordination.

The theoretical implications of this research strengthen the theory of change management and digital governance, which states that the readiness of information systems, organisational leadership, and the integration of government data greatly influence the transformation of public organisations. The results of the study confirm that the digital archiving system is not only an administrative function, but also a strategic information infrastructure that supports technology-based bureaucratic reform.

The practical implications indicate that local governments need to strengthen the integration of electronic archives systems, improve staff digital competence through continuous training, and ensure policy support and organisational leadership so that the implementation of digital archives runs optimally and sustainably.

This study has limitations, including the number of quantitative respondents, which is limited to one local government agency, and the scope of interviews, which still focuses on internal organisation actors, so it has not yet described the perspectives of public service users more broadly. Therefore, further research is suggested to expand the research locus in several local governments to obtain stronger generalisations, add public service quality variables as impact variables, and use a longitudinal approach to look at the long-term influence of archival digital transformation on the performance of bureaucratic reform and digital governance.

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