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## *Sambat Online Program's Pursuit of Citizen-Centric Information Services Empowerment*

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### ABSTRACT

The rise of digital technology has revived engagement between governments and citizens, advancing e-governance with improved communication, transparency, and flexibility. The *Sambat Online* Program promotes a citizen-centric approach to information services in Malang City which strategies for advancing e-governance in the digital age is considered important. This study aims to analyze challenges, strategies, and propose an actionable framework to improve Malang City's e-governance, with a focus on the *Sambat Online* Program's pursuit of citizen-centric information excellence. This study used a qualitative case study approach to examine the program. The results show that *the Sambat Online* application in Malang City faces organizational challenges and social issues such as lack of leadership, resistance to change, digital divide, digital literacy, and social inclusion needs. Technological challenges occur in terms of cybersecurity, updates, and system scalability. It also found that the Malang City Government needs a user-oriented e-government approach to ensure data security and privacy. In other words, the platform makes it easy for users to submit complaints, increasing citizen involvement in improving public services, however continuous program assessment and improvement are essential. Areas for improvement include improved complaint management, digital training, and strengthened cybersecurity, with a focus on complaint management as the most effective solution. In conclusion, the program enhances communication and comprehension between governing bodies and the public, highlighting its significance in contemporary governance.

### INTRODUCTION

The advent of digital technology in the modern era has led to a considerable transformation in the manner in which governmental entities engage with their citizenry. The shift has given rise to the emergence of e-governance, offering public institutions a unique chance to cultivate a governmental environment characterized by increased engagement (Ma, 2020), openness (Wirtz, 2019), and adaptability (Harrison, 2022). The fundamental essence of e-governance revolves around the notion of e-government, wherein a multitude of digital interactions between governmental institutions and individuals are encompassed. Information services frequently assist

in facilitating these exchanges, serving as vital conduits for the dissemination of governmental policies, execution of public services, and provision of critical civic information. Through this action, information services establish a resilient framework that facilitates individuals' involvement and active participation in governmental processes (Castro, 2022; Malodia, 2021)The convergence between e-government and information services brings about a framework for citizen-government interaction, distinguished by enhanced accessibility and heightened civic participation. This study presents a unique analysis of the *Sambat Online* Program in Malang, which departs from previous research and offers an in-depth study of how this initiative

concretely improves citizen-government interactions. Although previous studies have mainly examined e-government and information services, this study examines how the *Sambat Online* program promotes a citizen-centric approach. It uniquely emphasizes the program's challenges and strategies in solving municipal problems and facilitating communication and provides a case study that enriches the existing knowledge of e-government services. This approach sets it apart by illustrating the practical applications and outcomes of such programs, rather than focusing solely on theoretical aspects or general e-learning trends in government and citizen participation.

Nevertheless, the pursuit of e-governance excellence, specifically by means of citizen-centric information services, is riddled with obstacles (Ma, 2020; Mansoor, 2021; Paul, 2020; Sofyani, 2020). The challenges present in guaranteeing convenient access and user-friendly experience of digital platforms while upholding strict data privacy and transparency standards are numerous. Additionally, the pursuit of effectively merging conventional bureaucratic procedures with contemporary digital citizen engagement platforms gives rise to a distinct set of complexities (Mir, 2020).

The *Sambat Online* Program occupies a pivotal position within the realm of this digital transformation (Putra & Dhanuarta, 2021a), aiming to overcome the previously discussed challenges and optimize the channel for communication between the residents of Malang City and the local government entities. Through a comprehensive examination of the difficulties faced and approaches utilized by the *Sambat Online* Program, a more intricate comprehension can be obtained regarding the practical necessities for enhancing citizen-centricity in information services within the scope of e-governance.

This research intends to contribute to the ongoing discourse regarding the significant role of citizen-centric approaches in promoting e-governance excellence in the current era of digital advancements. To begin with, an overview of the *Sambat Online* Program in Malang City, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the development of a citizen-centric digital environment. As follows, it delves into the inherent challenges associated with the performance of *Sambat Online* as an information service centered around citizens.

Subsequently, an analysis is conducted on the strategies implemented by the *Sambat Online* Program to effectively navigate these challenges. Finally, an analysis of the overarching consequences of this undertaking on electronic governance, not solely limited to the confines of Malang City but potentially encompassing other administrative entities, shall be conducted.

## **METHODS**

The research employs a qualitative case study methodology to undertake an extensive examination of the *Sambat Online* Program, which serves as a representative example of citizen-centric e-governance initiatives. The initial step within this methodology entails conducting a comprehensive literature review (Rahman, 2020). A comprehensive investigation is undertaken to establish a strong theoretical foundation for the inquiry by thoroughly examining extant literature on citizen-centric approaches in e-governance, digital engagement frameworks, and similar initiatives on a global scale. Subsequent to the comprehensive examination of relevant academic literature, the following phase entails the mindful allocation of resources towards the preparation of a case study. The selection of Malang City as the focal point is based on the implementation of the *Sambat Online* Program. A comprehensive comprehension of the digital governance environment in Malang City, including the establishment and objectives of the *Sambat Online* Program, is achieved through the implementation of background research.

Data collection is the fundamental aspect of the methodology (Alam, 2021). This phase encompasses the process of document analysis, wherein official documents, reports, and publications about the *Sambat Online* Program undergo a thorough examination to apprehend its overarching goals, tactics, and resultant effects. The next phase involves data analysis, wherein thematic analysis is executed to encode and classify the amassed data, thereby discerning recurring themes, obstacles, and implemented strategies (Heale & Twycross, 2018). The synthesis and discussion phase incorporates the empirical observations to ascertain the learnings derived from the *Sambat Online* Program and elucidate the implications for other administrative bodies. In conclusion, the methodology includes the delivery of suggestions

and a concluding statement. Based on the findings, recommendations are proposed for enhancing citizen-centric digital governance. Additionally, a conclusion is reached that provides insight into the potential trajectory of future e-governance endeavors.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Understanding the *Sambat Online* and Addressing Challenges in the Digitalization of E-Government Complaints Services**

*Sambat Online* Program is a public complaint program that relies on information and communication technology in the context of government, both in implementing public policies and public services, as well as the implementation of the e-government concept in Malang City. The *Sambat Online* service, which is under the active administration of the Malang City Communication and Information Service, is deployed by government policies at both the central and regional (city) levels (Nuryanto, 2018; Putra & Dhanuarta, 2021b; Tolle et al., 2020). At the national level, there exists a regulation called the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment Regulation (Permenpan) Number 62 of 2018, which specifically addresses the management of complaints (Sobari et al., 2023). In the municipal context, Mayor Regulation (Perwali) Number 19 of 2010 has been established to govern the execution of Complaint Handling Services within the administrative framework of the Malang City Government (Putra & Dhanuarta, 2021b; Shobaruddin et al., 2023; Tolle et al., 2020).

The *Sambat Online* Program, initiated in May 2016, is accessible through the website interface and Short Message Service (SMS) (Lisa, 2019). Individuals who possess the capacity to register their grievances through online means will opt to utilize the website for lodging complaints, whereas those who lack accessibility to the website will resort to submitting their complaints through SMS. Upon submission of a complaint through *Sambat* SMS or the *Sambat* Website, the system will issue a ticket ID or complaint number. This unique identifier facilitates the tracking and monitoring of the complaint's progression through the handling process. In complaint management, there exists a high-level administrator situated at Diskominfo, alongside administrators at every regional apparatus (RA). Within each RA, administrative personnel

assume the responsibility of addressing grievances and overseeing the process of handling complaints. The response provided by the Public Department shall subsequently be directed back to the Department of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo), to address the grievances lodged by the general public. The administration of *Sambat Online* ought to adhere to the regulatory framework established by the Malang Mayor, encompassing application management, digital complaint administration, and cyber security.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that e-government systems, including *Sambat Online*, encounter a multitude of challenges according to existing research (Meitasari et al., 2023). These challenges can be classified into three distinct categories: organizational, social, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The organizational challenges within Malang City Government and private organizations encompass a dearth of dedicated leadership, a prevailing resistance to change, insufficient engagement of stakeholders, and a crucial requisite for cooperation and collaboration across all hierarchical levels. The successful implementation of the *Sambat Online* application necessitates the presence of dedicated leadership (Sujith, 2023) that is actively engaged in the development, promotion, and management of the service. Dedicated leaders will strive toward robust acceptance of this technology and formulate a coherent strategy to guarantee its effective implementation (Chernov et al., 2018). The presence of leaders who display resistance towards change, particularly in the adoption of the *Sambat Online* application, will inevitably impact the operational procedures and engagements between the Malang City Government and the local community. Resistance to change can manifest itself in individuals who lack familiarity with technology, as identified by Drolet (2020).

Furthermore, officials from the Malang City Government may exhibit resistance due to concerns regarding altered responsibilities or potential job reductions. Additionally, other stakeholders may also feel uneasy about the impending change.

Followed by the social vulnerabilities as challenges to implementation of the *Sambat Online*. First, there's the issue of accessibility (Shobaruddin et al., 2023). Not all residents of Malang City have the same access to the technology and internet

needed to use this application. For example, residents in rural areas or those with economic limitations may not have stable internet access or adequate devices. This creates a digital divide that may exclude a portion of society from using such applications (Sahi, 2013). Second, there is the digital skills challenge. Even though the internet and devices exist, not everyone has the skills to use applications like *Sambat Online*. This is especially true for demographic groups such as seniors or those unfamiliar with technology. Third, there are trust challenges (Alcaraz-Quiles, 2014). People may feel uncomfortable or distrustful of services provided digitally and prefer traditional face-to-face interactions. This lack of trust may hinder the acceptance and use of *Sambat Online*. Fourth, there are challenges to social inclusion. It is important that apps like *Sambat Online* are designed to cover all social and demographic groups. For example, people with disabilities may need certain accessibility features, and those who do not speak Indonesian fluently may need services in their own language.

On the other hand, the implementation of e-government applications such as *Sambat Online* also raises challenges in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The initial issue is the possibility of cyber security problems arising. With the Malang City Government's citizen data and transactions increasingly moving to digital platforms, the risk of cyber-attacks is becoming greater. This can take the form of data hacks (El-Ebiary, 2019), denial-of-service (DoS) attacks (Abdullah, 2020), and various other forms of data misuse. Securing data and transactions is a must to maintain public trust in applications like *Sambat Online*. Second, technical challenges may also arise as well as maintenance and update challenges (Tiwari & Gor, 2018). Technology is constantly changing and developing, so apps like *Sambat Online* must be constantly updated and adapted to remain relevant and effective. This requires resources and ongoing commitment from the government. Fourth, capability issues are also an ICT challenge. As the number of users increases, the system must be able to adapt and expand its capacity to serve increased demand, without reducing the quality of service.

Responding to all these challenges, the Malang City Government needs to design and implement an

e-government system with an inclusive and user-oriented approach, as well as maintaining data security and privacy (Lawford, 2019). Because if studied as a whole, even though there are many challenges, the potential benefits of *Sambat Online* as an e-government application in Malang City are very large. With appropriate and sustainable efforts, the Malang City Government can overcome these challenges and utilize technology to improve government services and the quality of life of the people of Malang City.

#### **Examining Opportunities for Accelerating *Sambat Online* Innovation in the Digital Space as an Implementation of E-Government**

It is important to understand that the effectiveness and efficiency of a solution will depend greatly on the specific context in which it is implemented. Thus, the most effective and efficient recommendations may vary depending on a variety of factors, including available resources, user needs, and the technological environment (Lee-Geiller & Lee, 2019). However, based on general experience in implementing online complaint systems, here are several recommendations that are often considered the most effective and efficient.

*Better Complaint Management.* In an online complaint system such as *Sambat Online*, the ability to efficiently manage a large number of complaints is essential. Systems like this often receive various types of complaints from various sources and therefore require good management to ensure all complaints are handled appropriately (K. R. Kumar et al., 2023). The Malang City Government has thousands of complaints per month regarding various issues. These complaints easily overwhelm the system and make it difficult to find and address the most important or pressing issues. In this case, machine learning algorithms can be used to manage and categorize complaints automatically (Samuel et al., 2023). For example, algorithms can be trained to identify keywords or phrases in complaints that indicate certain types of problems. This way, every complaint can be directed directly to the right department without the need for manual intervention, which can save time and resources. Good complaint management also involves effective data verification (Krause et al., 2020). This may involve checking data against Malang City Government databases or other organizations or requesting additional evidence from the

complainant. This is important to prevent abuse of the system and protect the reputation of individuals or businesses that may be defamed. With better complaint management, online complaint systems can be more effective in serving the public and dealing with the issues they face (Syeftiani & Saadah, 2023).

*Digital Training.* Even though most people may be familiar with the use of the internet and digital devices, there are still those who feel unfamiliar or even afraid of technology. For example, a senior citizen may feel overwhelmed by the idea of filing a complaint online. They may not know how to access the website, fill out a complaint form, or upload evidence (Etemad-Sajadi & Gomes Dos Santos, 2019). This can make them reluctant to use the online complaints system, or they can make mistakes when filing a complaint, which will ultimately complicate the handling process. To overcome this problem, the Malang City Government can hold a digital training program for the community. The program can take the form of a workshop, seminar, or online class that discusses how to use the online complaint system. This will give them practical experience and build their confidence in using the system. In addition, training can also cover other relevant topics, such as internet security and data privacy (Priisalu, 2017).

*Cybersecurity Improvements.* Information security is a crucial aspect of every digital system (Kumar, 2018) including online complaint systems such as *Sambat Online*. The protection of data and information submitted by users is very important to maintain public trust and ensure that the system can function properly. For example, *Sambat Online* may collect various types of sensitive information from users, such as name, address, and possibly specific details about their complaints. This information can be a target for hackers who try to steal personal data for various purposes, ranging from identity fraud to misuse of information for other criminal purposes. To prevent this, there are several steps you can take. First, data encryption is a very important step (De & Shukla, 2020; Samuel et al., 2023). This will ensure that data sent over the internet cannot be read by unauthorized third parties. Second, user authentication is also very important. This ensures that only authorized users can access the system and submit complaints. Third, the system needs to have a fast response to cybersecurity incidents. This may

involve cutting off the hacker's access to the system, fixing security gaps the hacker exploited, and possibly reporting to law enforcement if necessary.

The provision of services has assumed an imperative role in the attainment of individuals' achievements and advancement in contemporary society (Lee & Moon, 2020; Shkarlet et al., 2020; Stratu-Strelet et al., 2021). Public organizations are subjected to elevated expectations to deliver exceptional service while also upholding the rights and fulfilling the needs of citizens. By incorporating suggested strategies, *Sambat Online* can establish a comprehensive digital complaint service that caters to the entirety of the community in an inclusive manner. Moreover, the implementation of these recommendations ensures the security of user information, thereby fostering public confidence and trust in the system. These recommendations serve to safeguard user data, while simultaneously promoting the efficiency and efficacy of the online complaints system.

#### **Enhancing Complaints Management as the Primary Approach to Augment the Efficiency of Online Complaints System**

The enhancement of the *Sambat Online* Program's efficacy through the implementation of improved complaint management represents a crucial step towards the realization of a citizen-centric information service in Malang City. This enhancement constitutes an element of a more comprehensive goal of integrating digital innovations into the framework of e-governance, a current imperative that carries significant consequences for the government-citizen interface paradigm. The following narratives highlight the practical measures that can be implemented to elevate the e-governance of Malang City to an apex of citizen-centered superiority.

The first step would involve a thorough assessment of the current complaint management system in place within the *Sambat Online* Program. Gaining comprehension of the current dynamics, pinpointing obstacles, and comprehensively documenting the user experience from the standpoint of citizens are essential components (Jain, 2020; Kitanov et al., 2020). The evaluative phase of the research may utilize methodologies such as user surveys, focus group discussions, and data analytics to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the present situation. The

knowledge gained from this phase would serve as a strong basis for further improvement initiatives.

Secondly, the assimilation of cutting-edge technology has the potential to greatly enhance the effectiveness of complaint management. The implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Bokhari & Myeong, 2022) and Machine Learning (ML) (Bhuvana et al., 2023) offers potential benefits in terms of automatized categorization and prioritization of complaints with respect to their urgency and characteristics. Moreover, the implementation of Natural Language Processing (NLP) (Pratap & Dwivedi, 2020) has the potential to significantly augment the program's proficiency in comprehending and analyzing complaints, thereby facilitating the provision of faster and more precise responses. Additionally, the utilization of blockchain technology has the potential to cultivate transparency and promote trust through the provision of unalterable documentation of all engagements.

Thirdly, the inclusion of an integrated feedback mechanism within the *Sambat Online* Program has the potential to yield valuable findings regarding citizen satisfaction levels and the effectiveness of issue resolution strategies. A structured feedback mechanism facilitates an enhanced comprehension by the government of the perspectives held by citizens, thereby enabling the identification of areas in need of improvement and the prompt implementation of corrective measures (Pomaza-Ponomarenko et al., 2021). Moreover, consistent updates regarding the progress of complaint resolution, readily accessible to the general public, can significantly enhance confidence and trust in the established system. Community engagement and public awareness campaigns play a vital role in guaranteeing the efficacious implementation and usage of the augmented complaint management system. Governments can effectively cultivate a climate of engaged citizenship by implementing these campaigns. By educating citizens about the significance of and procedures for submitting complaints and offering feedback, the government can promote a culture of active involvement (Tang et al., 2021). A populace that possesses extensive knowledge and understanding is inclined to actively participate within the governing system, thereby enhancing the dialogue pertaining to electronic governance.

Fourthly, adopting a collaborative approach that involves forging partnerships with academia (Grigalashvili, 2022), technology enterprises (Biberman, 2021), and civil society organizations (Singh, 2023) has the potential to foster a comprehensive enhancement of the complaint management system. These collaborative initiatives have the potential to introduce novel viewpoints, inventive resolutions, and supplementary assets that play a pivotal role in tackling the intricate obstacles intertwined with e-governance. Finally, the implementation of an iterative methodology, supported by a culture of ongoing learning and adjustment, is critical for ensuring the enduring significance and efficacy of the *Sambat Online* Program. Regularly conducting evaluations, comparing against international standards, and embracing input and advancements are imperative for sustaining a citizen-centric approach in the perpetually changing realm of digital governance.

All in all, the path taken by Malang City towards a digital governance model that prioritizes its citizens, as conceptualized by the *Sambat Online* Program, demonstrates substantial prospects. Improvements can be made to the complaint management system within the *Sambat Online* Program through precise assessment, seamless technology integration, cultivation of community engagement, fostering of collaborative partnerships, and adherence to an iterative approach. This improvement not only represents a means to enhance service delivery but also signifies a significant advance towards cultivating a democratic, transparent, and inclusive e-governance framework that aligns with the desires and ambitions of the inhabitants of Malang City.

## **CONCLUSION**

The investigation of the *Sambat Online* program reveals that it serves as a favorable and innovative measure towards enhancing the rapport between authorities and the populace. *Sambat Online* offers an easily accessible and user-friendly online complaint platform, which enables the public to actively engage in enhancing the caliber of public services. Nevertheless, rigorous and ongoing evaluation and enhancement of the *Sambat Online* program hold utmost significance. In addition to the aforementioned considerations, it is imperative to further enhance the digital training components for

the given community. By implementing comprehensive training programs and robust user support, the government can effectively ensure the acquisition of sufficient knowledge and comprehension among the general populace regarding the utilization of *Sambat Online* and its associated technologies. In this instance, there is scope for a significant emphasis on enhancing complaint management. To enhance the efficacy of the *Sambat Online* program in managing complaints and public feedback, it is advisable to optimize its complaint management system through the utilization of machine learning algorithms for complaint classification and prioritization. Additionally, bolstering data verification mechanisms would significantly contribute to the program's efficiency. The implementation of the aforementioned measures is anticipated to enhance both the level of engagement and the efficiency of the *Sambat Online* initiative as a whole.

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