



ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE MARRIAGE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIMKAH) IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MARRIAGE LAW AT THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

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Abstract

This study evaluates the accountability of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) in the implementation of the Marriage Law at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, this study assesses the role of SIMKAH in improving the efficiency, accuracy, and transparency of marriage administration. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The analysis was carried out thematically, through four main stages: data reduction, coding, thematic grouping, and thematic descriptions to identify patterns related to SIMKAH accountability. The results of the study show that SIMKAH strengthens KUA's accountability by accelerating the recording process, reducing errors, and increasing access to information for related parties. However, some obstacles such as limited technology infrastructure and lack of user understanding are still challenges. This study recommends increasing training for staff and strengthening technology infrastructure to optimize the implementation of SIMKAH. These findings provide important insights for the government in developing a more accountable and transparent marriage administration system in Indonesia.

Keywords: SIMKAH, accountability, Marriage Law, Office of Religious Affairs, marriage administration.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengevaluasi akuntabilitas Sistem Informasi Manajemen Perkawinan (SIMKAH) dalam implementasi UU Perkawinan di Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA). Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, penelitian ini mengkaji peran SIMKAH dalam meningkatkan efisiensi, akurasi, dan transparansi administrasi perkawinan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis dilakukan secara tematik, melalui empat tahap utama: reduksi data, pengkodean, pengelompokan tematik, dan deskripsi tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola-pola yang terkait dengan akuntabilitas SIMKAH. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SIMKAH memperkuat akuntabilitas KUA dengan mempercepat proses pencatatan, mengurangi kesalahan, dan meningkatkan akses informasi bagi pihak terkait. Namun, beberapa kendala seperti

keterbatasan infrastruktur teknologi dan kurangnya pemahaman pengguna masih menjadi tantangan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan peningkatan pelatihan bagi staf dan penguatan infrastruktur teknologi untuk mengoptimalkan implementasi SIMKAH. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan penting bagi pemerintah dalam mengembangkan sistem administrasi perkawinan yang lebih akuntabel dan transparan di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: SIMKAH, akuntabilitas, Hukum Perkawinan, Kantor Urusan Agama, administrasi perkawinan.

A. Introduction

Accountability in public administration is an essential element that ensures transparency, openness, and public trust in government institutions (Bovens, 2007). In Indonesia, this accountability is increasingly important in marriage registration services regulated by Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, where marriage registration is a requirement for marriage legality that cannot be ignored (Anindito et al., 2024). To support the effectiveness and accountability in marriage registration, the government introduced the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) as a digital platform designed to manage marriage administration at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) (Subekti et al., 2022).

Previous research shows that management information systems in the field of public administration can strengthen accountability and efficiency. For example, research by Moon and Norris (2005) states that the digitization of public administration allows for increased information disclosure and the speed of public services. Similarly, a study by Kim and Lee (2014) in the context of information systems in the health sector shows that information technology not only improves data accuracy, but also improves public perception of the accountability of service institutions. However, specific research on the application of information systems in the marriage registration sector in Indonesia, especially in relation to SIMKAH, is still minimal.

This study uses North Tanjung Palas District in Bulungan Regency, North Kalimantan, as the research location because of its representative characteristics in the implementation of SIMKAH in areas with developing technological infrastructure. The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in this sub-district has adopted SIMKAH as part of the government's efforts to increase accountability and efficiency in marriage registration. However, the location also faces limited infrastructure challenges, such as unstable internet connectivity and human resources that need additional training in information technology. This condition provides a rich context

to explore the effectiveness of SIMKAH in improving public administration accountability and how local factors affect the implementation of digital policies.

This study aims to explore how SIMKAH improves accountability in marriage registration in KUA, with a focus on North Tanjung Palas District as a case study. Accountability is measured through the dimensions of administration, law, and transparency, referring to the theoretical framework from Bovens (2007) which highlights these three aspects in the context of public service. In addition, this study identifies the main challenges in the implementation of SIMKAH, such as limited technological infrastructure and lack of user understanding of the system (Rachman, 2021; Yuliah, 2020).

Thus, this research is expected to fill in the gaps in the literature regarding the role of SIMKAH in strengthening KUA accountability in marriage registration, as well as offer insights for the government in strengthening public administration digitalization policies. This study adds a new perspective to previous research by focusing on specific challenges at the local level and on SIMKAH applications, which differs from previous studies of more general information systems.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the accountability of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) in the implementation of the Marriage Law at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of North Tanjung Palas District. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides a deep understanding of the context and experiences of individuals directly involved in the implementation of SIMKAH (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). The focus of this case study is to analyze the marriage registration process through SIMKAH, as well as evaluate the aspects of accountability that are enhanced through the use of this system, including transparency, efficiency, and compliance with established procedures.

Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with KUA employees, brides and wives who use SIMKAH, and local community leaders. In addition, direct observation of SIMKAH operations at KUA is carried out to verify the procedures implemented and the challenges faced by staff (See table 1). Secondary data is collected from official documents, guidelines for the use of SIMKAH, and marriage statistics recorded in the system. This data was analyzed to obtain a holistic perspective on the role of SIMKAH in strengthening the accountability of marriage registration administration (Stake, 1995, pp. 78-79).

Table 1. Research Informants and Selection Considerations

Informant Name	Age	Position/Role	Selection Considerations
Aisyah (pseudonym)	35	Head of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA)	Holds in-depth knowledge of the policies and implementation of SIMKAH, as well as administrative responsibilities.
Budi (pseudonym)	40	KUA Staff	Directly involved in the operational processes of SIMKAH, including marriage registration and documentation.
Citra (pseudonym)	27	Prospective Bride	Utilises SIMKAH during the marriage registration process; provides insights from a user's perspective.
Dedi (pseudonym)	50	Community Leader	Offers views on the transparency and impact of SIMKAH on the local community.
Evi (pseudonym)	30	SIMKAH Operator at KUA	Responsible for the technical operation of SIMKAH; understands the system's strengths and challenges firsthand.

Notes:

- Informant names are pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.
- The selection of informants was based on their direct involvement in the marriage registration process and SIMKAH operations, as well as their relevance to the research focus on the system's accountability in supporting the implementation of the Marriage Law.

Data analysis is carried out thematically through four main stages: data reduction, coding, theme grouping, and thematic description. The first stage, data reduction, is carried out by sorting relevant data from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In the coding stage, researchers identify themes

related to accountability, such as transparency, efficiency, and technological constraints (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 83-84). The data is then grouped according to the theme found, allowing the identification of key patterns in the implementation of SIMKAH. The last stage, thematic description, serves to present the findings in a narrative manner, which provides an in-depth picture of how SIMKAH affects the accountability of marriage registration in KUA.

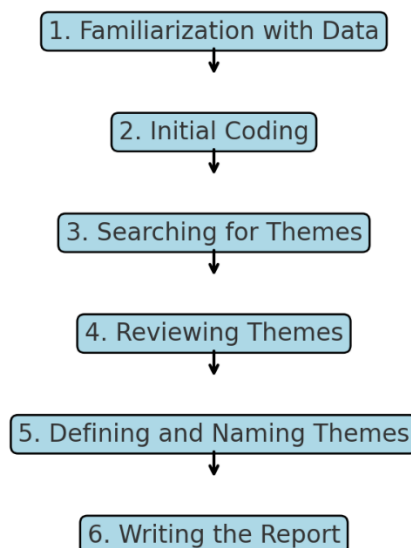


Figure 1 Braun & Clarke Thematic Analysis, 2006

The data analysis flowchart is presented in Figure 1, illustrating the four main stages of thematic analysis used to process the data. This approach allows for a more structured and systematic understanding of the aspects that the research focuses on, by maintaining validity through triangulation of data from various sources (Yin, 2018, p. 210).

C. Result

This Results follows six stages of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) which involve stages: familiarization with data, initial coding, theme search, theme review, theme naming, and report writing. This analysis is used to understand how SIMKAH is implemented in the KUA of North Tanjung Palas District in supporting the implementation of the Marriage Law and strengthening the accountability of public administration.

1. Familiarization with Data

The researcher started by repeatedly reading interview and observation data to understand the main patterns that emerged related to the use of SIMKAH in KUA. Data shows that SIMKAH brings significant changes in marriage registration,

especially in terms of efficiency, transparency, and legal compliance. However, technical challenges and infrastructure limitations are still the main obstacles.

This familiarization shows that SIMKAH has great potential to improve the quality of public administration through accountability and efficiency. However, the success of its implementation is greatly influenced by the readiness of human resources and adequate infrastructure.

2. Initial Coding

Initial coding is done to identify the important elements of the data. The codes found included "administrative efficiency," "legal accountability," "transparency," and "infrastructure limitations." These codes help researchers segment respondents' answers and observation notes.

There are three codes that the researcher formulated, the first is Administrative Efficiency: "SIMKAH speeds up recording and reduces manual errors." Second, Legal Accountability: "The system ensures the completeness of documents in accordance with regulations." And third, Infrastructure Limitations: "Slow internet is often an obstacle."

This initial coding shows that there is an important aspect in the implementation of SIMKAH that needs to be considered, namely the role of technology in increasing accountability and challenges that arise due to technological limitations.

3. Theme Search

At this stage, the codes that appear are grouped into three main themes: Improving Administrative Efficiency and Recording Accuracy, Strengthening Legal Accountability and Transparency, and Infrastructure and Technology Constraints.

1. Improved Administrative Efficiency and Recording Accuracy: SIMKAH allows for faster recording and reduces recording errors that are common in manual processes.
2. Strengthening Legal Accountability and Transparency: SIMKAH helps ensure that every marriage registration complies with legal regulations, providing legal certainty for married couples.
3. Infrastructure and Technology Constraints: Limited internet hampers SIMKAH's operations, and employees who are not familiar with technology experience difficulties in running the system.

This grouping of themes shows that SIMKAH has the ability to improve accountability, but external constraints such as inadequate technological infrastructure can affect the expected results.

4. Theme Review

Theme reviews are carried out to ensure that the themes are in accordance with the data obtained. The themes found represent the main dimensions of SIMKAH accountability at KUA, namely efficiency, legal compliance, and technological limitations.

This review confirms that while SIMKAH supports some aspects of accountability, its optimization requires consistent technology support and user readiness.

5. Theme Naming

Each theme is then given a more specific name to make it clearer:

- a. Administrative Efficiency and Recording Accuracy
- b. Strengthening Legal Accountability and Transparency
- c. Infrastructure and Technology Constraints

The naming of this theme highlights how SIMKAH supports the basic principles of public administration, namely efficiency and accountability, which are key values in improving the quality of public services.

6. Report Writing

The last stage is to string these themes into a complete report writing. This discussion relates the findings to previous theories and research.

Table. 2 Findings Research

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Key Findings</i>	<i>Data Source</i>
<i>Administrative Efficiency and Accuracy</i>	SIMKAH simplifies and speeds up the recording process, reducing administrative burden.	Interview with KUA employees
<i>Legal Accountability and Transparency</i>	The system increases public trust and ensures recording in accordance with legal regulations.	Interview with the head of KUA, the community
<i>Infrastructure and Technology Constraints</i>	The unstable internet and limited technological competence of employees are the main obstacles.	Live observation, interviews

D. Discussion and Theoretical Implications

The results of this study show that the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of North Tanjung Palas District has a significant impact on the aspects of accountability and efficiency of public administration but is still faced with infrastructure constraints and user competence. Based on the three main themes identified – Administrative Efficiency and Recording Accuracy, Strengthening Legal Accountability and Transparency, and Infrastructure Constraints and Technology

Use – this discussion will deepen the analysis with relevant international theories and literature. The following findings and data discussion are illustrated through the chart below

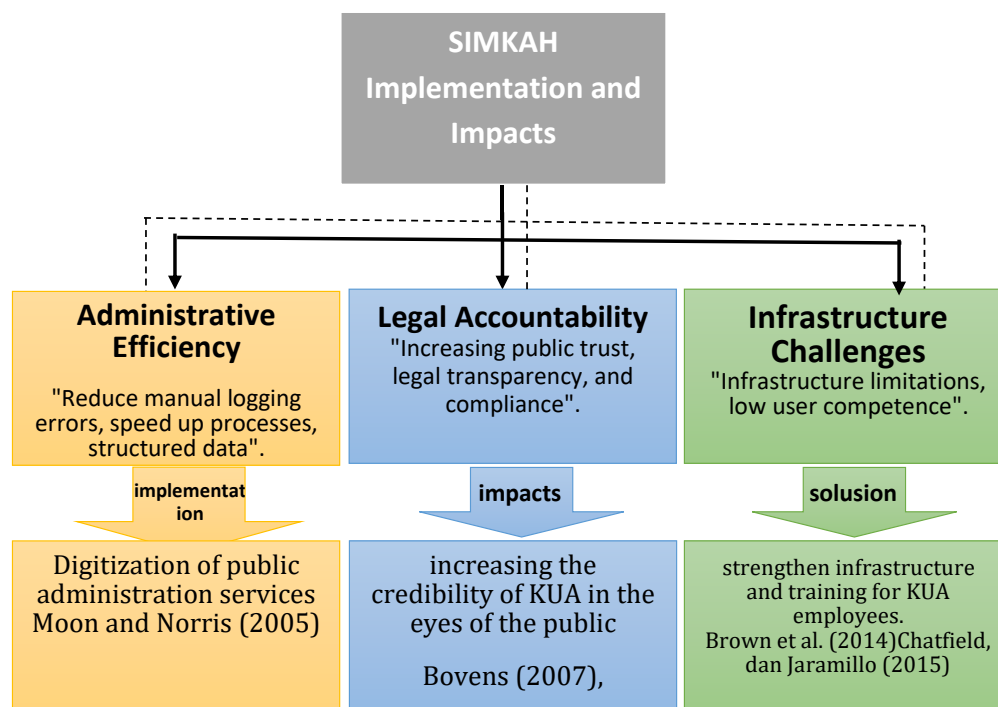


Figure 1. findings flowchart

a. Administrative Efficiency and Recording Accuracy

The digitization of public administration services has become a common practice in many countries to improve efficiency and reduce manual administrative errors. A study by Moon and Norris (2005) shows that the digitization of public administration at the city level allows for increased service speed and data accuracy. This is consistent with findings at the North Tanjung Palas District KUA, where SIMKAH speeds up the marriage registration process, reduces manual registration errors, and allows employees to focus on other substantive tasks. KUA employees, as interviewed, stated that with SIMKAH, the recording process becomes faster and more structured, minimizes data duplication, and reduces the possibility of losing important documents.

Another study that supports these findings is a study by Sivarajah et al. (2017), which states that the use of technology in public services allows for more efficient data flow and reduced barriers to information access. This is also in line with the

view of Zheng, Chen, and Huang (2018) who found that the use of information systems increases the responsiveness and effectiveness of government agencies in meeting the administrative needs of the community. In this context, SIMKAH provides great benefits for KUA in managing and controlling marriage data in a structured and accurate manner, reducing the risk of errors that often occur in manual systems.

SIMKAH shows effectiveness in improving work efficiency in KUA, but researchers also consider that periodic maintenance and improvement of system quality are very important to maintain this efficiency. SIMKAH needs to be supported by good technical maintenance so that the system can continue to function optimally. The effectiveness of SIMKAH also depends on the user's understanding of the system's features, so periodic training for KUA employees needs to be a priority.

b. Strengthening Legal Accountability and Transparency

Accountability is a key element in public administration, especially in the context of legal records such as marriage. The results of the study show that SIMKAH supports compliance with Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, ensuring that every recording is carried out in accordance with applicable legal requirements. This is important in ensuring the legality and validity of each marriage recorded, providing legal protection to married couples and reducing potential conflicts or legal issues later.

These findings are consistent with the view of Bovens (2007), who stated that public accountability in government administration is closely related to transparency and compliance with regulations. At KUA, SIMKAH ensures that each marriage is recorded formally and transparently, so that information can be accessed and verified by relevant parties. Research by Kim and Lee (2014) supports this view by stating that information systems implemented in the public sector increase transparency and public trust in institutions. With SIMKAH, people have more faith in the marriage registration process because the process is considered safer and standardized, providing a sense of security for them that the procedures they go through are in accordance with the rules.

Another international study by Bannister and Connolly (2011) found that information technology can improve transparency in public administration, by ensuring easier access to data and reducing the risk of data manipulation. This research also shows that technology has an important role in maintaining the credibility of government institutions in the eyes of the public. In the context of SIMKAH, the application of technology ensures that every marriage registration

process is carried out to the same standard, reducing the room for administrative errors or omissions.

SIMKAH not only functions as an administrative tool, but also plays an important role in strengthening legal accountability. Researchers argue that this system increases the credibility of KUA in the eyes of the public, by providing assurance that all marriage registration processes are in accordance with applicable regulations. Thus, SIMKAH can be considered as a means of strengthening legal accountability in public registration services.

c. Infrastructure Challenges and Technology Usage

Although SIMKAH shows great benefits in public administration, the limitations of technological infrastructure are a major obstacle affecting its effectiveness. One of the main challenges faced in the implementation of SIMKAH in KUA is unstable internet access, which often hinders marriage registration and leads to repeated data inputs. In this context, research by Gil-Garcia et al. (2018) found that the success of digitization of public services in remote areas is highly dependent on the readiness of technological infrastructure. Limited internet connectivity can affect the quality of public services and become the main obstacle to the smooth running of the system.

Another study by Reddick, Chatfield, and Jaramillo (2015) also emphasizes the importance of adequate infrastructure and the availability of internet access as the main conditions for the success of e-governance in various regions. KUA Tanjung Palas Utara District faces a similar challenge, where limited connectivity affects the ability of employees to use SIMKAH optimally. In addition, the limited understanding of employees to technology is also an obstacle in the use of SIMKAH. Research by Brown et al. (2014) found that training and technical support are essential to ensure the successful implementation of technology systems in public institutions, especially in areas with limited access to technology.

The researcher argues that inadequate infrastructure and lack of technological competence of employees are significant challenges for SIMKAH in KUA, North Tanjung Palas District. SIMKAH has the potential to improve the quality of services, but without adequate infrastructure support, this potential cannot be fully utilized. In addition, periodic training needs to be provided to employees to ensure their competence in using the system. Therefore, the researcher recommends collaboration between KUA and technology service providers to strengthen internet infrastructure and provide continuous training for KUA employees.

d. Theoretical Implications

This research makes a theoretical contribution to the understanding of digital accountability in public administration, especially in the context of marriage registration in Indonesia. SIMKAH supports the theory of public accountability by ensuring that every marriage registration process is carried out transparently and in accordance with the law. This reinforces the theory put forward by Bovens (2007) that information technology can be an important instrument in increasing public accountability in the government administration sector.

In addition, these findings add a new perspective in research on the digitization of public administration in remote areas. As stated by Bannister and Connolly (2011), the success of technology in increasing accountability is highly dependent on the readiness of infrastructure and user competence. In this regard, this study underscores the importance of continuous training and adequate infrastructure support as a prerequisite for the success of information technology in the public sector

E. Conclusion

This study shows that the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of North Tanjung Palas District has a significant contribution in improving administrative efficiency and public accountability in marriage registration. By using SIMKAH, marriage registration can be done faster, more accurately, and in a structured manner, reducing the administrative burden that usually hampers KUA employees. In addition, SIMKAH ensures compliance with the Marriage Law, provides legal guarantees for married couples, and strengthens public trust in the public services provided by KUA.

However, this study also found several key challenges in the implementation of SIMKAH, especially related to the limitations of technological infrastructure and user skills. Unstable internet connections in the North Tanjung Palas area often hamper the smooth operation of SIMKAH, while some employees still need further training to understand and use technology effectively.

From a theoretical point of view, this study supports the theory of public accountability which emphasizes the importance of transparency and legal compliance in public administration. However, these findings also emphasize that the success of information technology implementation in the public sector is highly dependent on the readiness of infrastructure and the competence of human resources. Therefore, continuous support in the form of infrastructure improvements, regular training, and cooperation with internet service providers is urgently needed to ensure that SIMKAH can function optimally in various regions.

Overall, this study confirms that information technology such as SIMKAH can be an important instrument in improving the efficiency and accountability of public administration, especially in record-keeping that requires strict legal compliance. However, to achieve maximum benefits, supporting factors such as infrastructure and technological skills need to be improved so that SIMKAH can truly serve as a long-term solution for more accountable marriage registration in Indonesia..

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