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Digital Transformation as Revitalization of Work Culture in Good Institutional Governance at FITK Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia and Southern Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of digital transformation acceleration in revitalizing work culture to support good institutional governance at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) at UIN Walisongo, Indonesia, and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani, Thailand. Digital transformation encompasses the application of technology and contributing to transparent, accountable, and efficient institutional governance. This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with leaders, educators, and administrative staff at both institutions, as well as through participant observations. Thematic techniques and a grounded theory approach were used to analyze the data and understand the dynamics of digital transformation and work culture at both institutions. The results show that FITK Walisongo's digital transformation is supported by national policies that increase work efficiency and internal collaboration. In contrast, Ma'had Darul Ma'arif faces infrastructure constraints and resistance; however, ongoing training has begun to strengthen staff engagement and institutional openness. In conclusion, accelerating digital transformation plays a strategic role in strengthening work culture and promoting good governance values in educational institutions worldwide.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Work Culture, Good Institutional Governance, Indonesia, Southern Thailand.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and technological advances, digital transformation has become a major driving force of change, including in the world of education and institutional governance. Digitalization not only changes the way of learning but also affects the work culture and management system as a whole (Aoun, 2017). essential for creating a responsive, data-driven, and flexible work system. In education, digitalization supports blended learning models, expands access to education, and fosters the development of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking and digital literacy. Additionally, digitalization increases management's efficiency, adaptability, and professionalism through systems such as ERP and LMS (Lyon et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to accelerate digital transformation so that educational institutions do not fall behind in innovation and global competitiveness.

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has driven major changes in various sectors, including education. Information and communication technology (ICT) is the main driver of this digital transformation (Richter et al., 2019). In higher education and Islamic boarding schools, using technology is essential to improving the quality of services and institutional governance. FITK UIN Walisongo and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif in southern Thailand must respond to this change by fostering an adaptive and innovative work culture. Digital transformation is a strategic solution that improves the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of educational delivery (Hesse et al., 2022). At UIN Walisongo, this transformation has taken place through the use of a learning management system (LMS) and the integration of digital academic services, such as FRS, KST, HSS, guardianship, and transcripts, on the academic portal, walisongo.ac.id. Meanwhile, Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Pattani has also begun adopting digital technology to support Islamic education learning and the management process.

Digital transformation has changed the work paradigm, where information technology allows work more flexibly and efficiently through the use of information technology. The use of technologies such as collaboration software, cloud computing, and automation has increased operational efficiency and enabled remote work. These changes also create the need to transform traditional work cultures into more adaptive, technology-based ones, which ultimately has a positive impact on institutional governance. According to McKinsey (2018), organizations that have successfully carried out digital transformation have experienced productivity increases of up to 20-30%. In the context of the public sector, digitalization cuts operational costs and improves the quality of public services.

Digitalization affects not only technology but also work culture. Implementing technology-based work systems enables a more collaborative, flexible, and data-driven

work model. This gives rise to a change from a hierarchical organizational structure to a more horizontal and open one. Elgohary (2022) reports that companies that adopt digital technology-based collaborative work can respond to change faster and create better innovations.

In the modern era, the digitalization of teaching, learning, and institutional management is an effort to improve the accessibility and quality of educational services. In the environments of FITK UIN Walisongo and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif, using technology such as e-learning, centralized data management, and digital administrative systems is an important step in responding to the needs of the times. Accelerating digital transformation can revitalize work culture and make it more responsive to change. Thus, digital transformation can be a major driver of good institutional governance, which focuses on improving quality, accountability, and transparency.

However, digital transformation does not always run smoothly in various institutions, especially those with different cultures and resources. This comparative study focuses on two religious higher education institutions: the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) of the State Islamic University (UIN) Walisongo, Semarang, and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani, South Patani, Thailand. These institutions differ in terms of geographical location, culture, and level of technology implementation. FITK UIN Walisongo is located in Indonesia, a country with relatively advanced digital infrastructure, while Ma'had Darul Ma'arif is located in southern Thailand, an area with limited access to technology and a strong traditional religious culture.

Transparency and accountability are two of the main principles of good governance. Digital transformation enables the implementation of a transparent management information system that allows for real-time monitoring of budget management, policies, and performance. This helps prevent corrupt practices and increase public trust in institutions. According to the World Bank (2022), countries that adopted digital systems in the public sector experienced a significant decrease in corruption rates and increased accountability in public management.

Revitalizing work culture is essential to embracing the digital era. The traditional work culture, which tends to be manual and inefficient, must change to become more dynamic and technology-based. At FITK UIN Walisongo and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif, implementing this new work culture will optimize existing resources and increase the institution's competitiveness. Using digital technology means more than just using new tools; it also means changing the way we think about and approach work. Implementing a more collaborative, transparent, and data-driven work system is essential to revitalizing work culture in educational institutions.

Digital transformation requires greater digital competence among employees. Institutions must provide continuous training and skills development to help employees adapt to new technologies. This effort revitalizes work culture by improving technological skills and understanding, and it supports the implementation of good governance by increasing productivity and efficiency.

Implementing good institutional governance in the education sector requires adapting to technological developments. FITK UIN Walisongo and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif face challenges, including limited digital infrastructure and human resources, as well as resistance to changes in work culture. However, there is a significant opportunity to enhance institutional governance by accelerating digital transformation. Technology can improve decision-making mechanisms, monitor performance, and increase participation and accountability. Therefore, the acceleration of digital transformation must be carried out in a structured and sustainable manner.

Digital transformation has changed the way educational and training institutions deliver programs for developing skills and knowledge. E-learning and technology-based training enable institutions to provide broader, more flexible, and more inclusive access to education, thereby strengthening the development of digital skills for the workforce. According to Koske et al. (2015), implementing e-learning in educational institutions and the government sector improves the quality of skills development and employee adaptability in the digital era.

The implementation of digital transformation in educational institutions needs to consider the local cultural context. At Ma'had Darul Ma'arif and FITK UIN Walisongo, cultural and religious values are an integral part of the learning process and institutional governance. Therefore, accelerating digital transformation requires an approach that integrates local cultural values and modern technological principles. This approach is expected to promote good governance and improve the quality of education while preserving existing noble values. A balanced digital transformation that considers both modernization and cultural preservation is a strategic step in creating superior educational institutions with strong character.

This research is important to understand how both institutions implement digital transformation to support the revitalization of work culture and strengthen institutional governance. FITK UIN Walisongo faces the challenge of improving HR competency to optimize digital technology use in teaching, learning, and management processes. Conversely, Ma'had Darul Ma'arif must maintain traditional values while adapting to technological advances.

By conducting this comparative study, it is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the acceleration of digital transformation in religious educational institutions and their contribution to good institutional governance. The study also provides strategic recommendations for institutions to face future digital transformation challenges in local and international contexts. As a revitalization of work culture, digital transformation cannot be ignored and plays an important role in achieving good university governance. Digital transformation seeks to integrate and improve performance, ultimately changing work culture, as well as the mindset, norms, and values that support good governance in educational institutions.

Some of the problems that hinder good university governance include: (1) Inconsistency of values and work ethics. This phenomenon includes inconsistencies in values and work ethics among members of the organization, such as inconsistencies between official statements and daily actions. For example, an organization may officially declare values such as integrity, transparency, responsiveness, and accountability, but some actions may be inconsistent with these values, hindering the formation of a cohesive work culture oriented toward good governance. Additionally, treating individuals differently based on position or personal relationships creates inequality, which is contrary to the values of equality and justice. (2) Lack of employee involvement and participation: When employees do not feel involved or have a significant role in the digital transformation process or the revitalization of the work culture, implementing good governance can be difficult. This creates a gap between management aspirations and employee perceptions at the Ministry of Religion. (3) Low leadership capacity: The success of digital transformation and work culture revitalization often depends on leadership capacity. If leaders lack sufficient understanding, communication skills, and the ability to empower employees, low leadership capacity can hinder cultural change. (4) Inadequate Organizational Communication: A lack of organizational communication can result in unclear visions, missions, and values to be implemented. Ineffective communication can hinder the development of a work culture that supports good governance. (5) Unclear Roles and Responsibilities: A lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities within an organization can lead to confusion among employees. If it is unclear who is responsible for implementing changes or leading the digital transformation and cultural shift, the revitalization efforts may be ineffective.

To address the above issues, it is necessary to accelerate the digital transformation process to revitalize the work culture, optimize operational processes, reduce bureaucracy, and free up employees' time to focus on important aspects that support good university governance at FITK Walisongo Semarang and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani Southern Thailand.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative study design to analyze the impact of digital transformation on work culture and governance at FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani, Southern Thailand. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in its natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2016), while a comparative study was used to identify similarities and differences in the implementation of digitalization in both institutions (Goodrick, 2014).

Data were collected from key informants, including leaders, educators, administrative staff, and relevant students, who were purposively selected based on their roles in institutional digitalization (Zahidda & Sugiyono, 2017). Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, direct observation of digital activities, and analysis of policy documents and reports related to digitalization (H. Miles & Huberman, 2020).

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and qualitatively in three stages. First, important information was filtered to reduce the data. Next, the data were presented in narrative form. Finally, conclusions were drawn to identify the impact of digitalization on the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of work culture and institutional governance (E. Miles & Crisp, 2014). To maintain data validity, triangulation of sources and methods was employed by comparing various information and data collection techniques to ensure accurate and consistent research results (Patton, 1999). This research is expected to contribute to the development of digital-based governance in Islamic educational institutions and serve as a reference for other institutions seeking to undergo digital transformation.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Revitalization of Work Culture

The revitalization of a work culture involves renewing the organization's values, norms, and practices to improve effectiveness, productivity, and employee well-being. The goal of this process is to keep the work culture relevant and aligned with the organization's strategy when facing changes, such as technological advances and market dynamics. Work culture encompasses the values, norms, attitudes, and behaviors that guide how tasks and responsibilities are carried out in the work environment. It reflects the organization's identity and influences employee performance, productivity, and satisfaction. A strong, positive work culture creates a harmonious, innovative, and productive work environment.

According to Schein (2010), work culture is formed through continuous organizational adaptation to external challenges and internal integration. Additionally, work culture functions as an identity that distinguishes one organization from another. To revitalize work culture, organizations can focus on flexible work arrangements, prioritizing employee health and well-being, fostering connections among employees, investing in training and development, and integrating technology into the workplace. These strategies align with current trends in workplace culture revitalization (Bushy et al., 2023). Revitalization is a process of integrating, reconfiguring, and optimizing resources to improve the quality and effectiveness of a program or system experiencing declining performance (Wen et al., 2020). It plays a role in resolving or reducing problems through a comprehensive evaluation of revitalized policies or programs (Ignasiak-Szulc, 2020). The success of revitalization can positively impact various sectors, including health, security, and institutional stability (Bararatin & Agustin, 2015). Basically, revitalization is a long-term, dynamic program designed to restore an institution's functional capacity so that it can provide optimal benefits to the wider community again (Hager, 2013). This process requires significant resources and commitment from various parties to support sustainable development (Hospers, 2017). Revitalization is part of government and non-government policies (Kartini, 2017). One area widely discussed in the literature is education (McCarty, 2021). Educational revitalization involves developing a more comprehensive, persistent, and responsible system to achieve educational goals. Revitalization is important for overcoming various challenges and maximizing the benefits of education (Nuryana, 2017). This process involves the structural, cultural, and infrastructural aspects of educational institutions (Galla, 2016). In Indonesia, educational revitalization focuses on strengthening character through formal education and Islamic-based education, such as madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (Tayibnapis, Wuryaningsih, & Gora, 2021).

Educational revitalization aims to increase program effectiveness and achieve educational goals. In general, revitalization is an important process in various fields, including education, to optimize results (Chiblow & Meighan, 2022). A work culture comprises the values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape an organization's identity and influence its members' behavior when carrying out their duties and responsibilities. It includes how to communicate, solve problems, and interact with individuals within the organization. A strong, positive work culture can foster a harmonious, innovative, and productive work environment (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Revitalizing a work culture involves renewing or reinforcing the existing values and norms. This process is important for various reasons, including (1) adapting to change: Technological developments, regulatory changes, and market dynamics require adjustments to work culture so that

organizations can remain competitive. (2) improving performance: A work culture that is no longer aligned with organizational goals can lead to decreased performance. Revitalization can improve productivity and efficiency. (3) strengthening employee loyalty: A renewed work culture that aligns with employee aspirations can increase satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. (4) overcoming internal challenges: Internal conflict, stagnation, and declining employee morale can be overcome through the effective revitalization of the work culture. (Maher, 2000).

Table 1: Findings on the Revitalization of Work Culture in Two Institutions

No.	Aspect	FITK UIN Walisongo (Indonesia)	Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani
1	Leadership Style	Transformational and collegial leadership with a strong Islamic academic foundation	Religious-based leadership with high community respect and authority
2	Work Ethos	Discipline, accountability, and innovation emphasized in academic tasks	Strong commitment to religious duty and community service
3	Collaboration Culture	Interdisciplinary collaboration among lecturers and students	Strong teacher-student bond with community-based activities
4	Professional Development	Regular workshops, seminars, and international academic networks	Limited formal training, but intensive religious study and local mentoring
5	Institutional Values	Integration of Islamic, Indonesian, and global values	Preservation of Islamic tradition and Malay identity
6	Digital Adaptation	Strong use of digital platforms in academic and administrative processes	Limited digital integration due to infrastructure and cultural context
7	Revitalization Strategy	Strategic planning with measurable targets and academic KPIs	Revitalization through spiritual renewal and community empowerment

2. Good University Governance

Good University Governance (GUG) is the application of good governance principles in the management of higher education institutions. The application of GUG aims to ensure that higher education institutions are managed transparently, accountably, and responsibly to achieve quality and sustainable education goals. According to Effendy (2021), GUG is an adaptation of the concept of Good Corporate Governance (GCG), which is applied in the corporate sector. The main principles that form the basis of GUG include transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. These principles are interrelated and support each other in creating effective and efficient university governance.

Good University Governance (GUG) is a university governance principle that emphasizes transparency, accountability, participation, and integrity in the management of higher education institutions. This concept is adapted from the principle of good governance to ensure that universities are managed effectively, efficiently, and sustainably (Susiatiningsih et al., 2021). GUG encompasses resource management, decision-making, and policy implementation oriented toward achieving the university's vision and mission (Lateh & Fadhilah, 2025). The goal is to minimize conflicts of interest and increase public trust in higher education institutions. Implementing GUG improves academic quality, encourages innovation and research, and creates a conducive academic environment. Through good governance, universities can achieve academic excellence and strengthen their national and international credibility (Nurnisya, Saad, & Noor, 2022).

Good Governance is a concept closely related to how an organization manages itself and implements its policies. It includes principles and values that aim to create an environment of efficient, transparent, accountable, and responsive management to the needs of society (Sadat, 2009). The World Bank (1992) defines Good Governance as how a government exercises its power to manage resources and implement policies that achieve development goals.

Good Governance emphasizes efficient and effective resource management. Organizations or governments that implement Good Governance ensure that the decision-making process is based on careful analysis, clear objectives, and achieving optimal results for society. Transparency is a key element of Good Governance. Transparency includes making adequate information available, ensuring a clear understanding of policies and procedures, and providing equal access to all parties for data and decisions related to public policy (Sadat, 2009). Transparency is an important foundation for building public trust in the government and related institutions.

There are several definitions of Good Governance, but they all lead to the same core meaning (Odobasa, 1997). Governance for Sustainable Human Development: A UNDP Policy Document conveys that Good Governance involves active community participation in decision-making, which increases accountability and justice. Meanwhile, the World Bank conveys that Good Governance ensures impartiality and fair treatment of all parties, without siding with certain groups or individuals (Gibbon, 2013).

According to Kaufmann, the realization of good governance requires a strong legal order in which the law is applied fairly and without discrimination. The balance of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial institutions is also important to prevent abuse of power in good governance. Furthermore, good governance prioritizes implementing fair laws, protecting human rights, and sustaining legal order. The consistent and non-discriminatory application of the law is a crucial step in creating a stable and reliable environment. Kaufmann also said that Good Governance emphasizes the efficient and effective management of resources to achieve development goals, and that efforts to eradicate corruption are an integral part of good governance in creating a clean and fair environment.

Of the various principles above, Good Governance is based on the main principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, and responsiveness. While these principles may vary between institutions and experts, they all share the same goal, which is to establish solid and responsible governance. The success of Good Governance depends on the synergy between the government, the private sector, society, and stakeholders to support sustainable development. To achieve this, institutions need a clear, genuine, and legitimate accountability system so they can operate effectively, efficiently, and free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

Digital transformation is the process that enables organizations, including universities, to adopt digital technologies to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. In the context of universities, digital transformation modernizes teaching and administrative methods, strengthening the principles of Good University Governance (GUG). Integrating technology provides the necessary tools to improve transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness in university governance. Transparency is one of the core principles of GUG that can be strengthened through digital transformation. Digital technologies enable universities to provide clearer, more accessible information to all stakeholders. Management information systems (MIS) and academic information portals are examples of such technologies.

The implementation of GUG principles through digital transformation in higher education is interrelated and mutually supportive. Principles provide a solid framework

for higher education institutions to face the challenges and opportunities arising from digital transformation. Similarly, digital transformation can reinforce the adoption of GUG principles by offering more efficient tools and systems that promote transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement.

According to Koske et al. (2015), universities that successfully integrate GUG principles with digital technology tend to be more adaptive, innovative, and sustainable when facing global environmental changes. Therefore, universities need to develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to implement GUG and digital transformation simultaneously. Digital technology can strengthen accountability by providing better mechanisms for tracking and evaluating university performance. Through the Digital Reporting and Audit System, universities can conduct internal and external audits more efficiently. Additionally, the performance dashboard allows for real-time monitoring of university performance by collecting data from various sources. This makes it easier for university management to assess and make decisions based on accurate data (McKinsey, 2018).

There are several benefits of digital transformation, including: (1) Digital transformation can strengthen university accountability by improving the management and monitoring of activities. (2) Digital technology allows for the automation of administrative processes, such as student data management, finance, and personnel. These systems sped up processes and reduced manual workloads, allowing time and resources to be allocated to more strategic tasks. A digital-based information system makes reporting and performance monitoring more transparent. Digital transformation allows all university stakeholders, including students, lecturers, and the government, to clearly and accurately monitor university performance. Third, data management and information security can protect both university data and student personal data from unauthorized access and ensure compliance with data protection regulations (Kane et al., 2015a)

Fourth, independent decision-making systems: Technologies such as data analytics support evidence-based decision-making. This allows universities to make decisions independently, unaffected by external pressures (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Fifth, data-driven admissions and assessment systems can be conducted more objectively and fairly, minimizing human bias. Digital transformation in higher education enables students and staff to anonymously provide feedback or report issues, helping universities identify and address inequities and other problems (Kane et al., 2015b).

Digital transformation affects not only the way universities deliver educational services, but also university governance. The effective implementation of digital technology can support GUG principles by increasing transparency, accountability, and

efficiency. For instance, the use of a digital financial management system can make university fund management more transparent and accountable (Sudrajat, 2021).

Table 2. Findings on Good University Governance in Two Institutions

No	Governance Aspect	FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang (Indonesia)	Ma'had Ma'arif Al Fathani (Southern Thailand)
1	Transparency	Implementing open academic policies, accessible financial reports, and public academic performance	Limited transparency due to centralized management and less access to public reports
2	Accountability	Clearly defined roles for faculty and administrative staff, with annual performance reviews	Accountability is primarily religious and community-based, and lacks formal review mechanisms
3	Participation	Involving stakeholders (students, faculty, and alumni) in curriculum development and quality assurance	Decision-making is dominated by religious leaders, and limited student or faculty participation
4	Responsiveness	Fast response to curriculum updates and digital transformation post-COVID-19	Slow adaptation to modern educational tools and the emphasis remains on traditional learning
5	Equity and Inclusiveness	Inclusive policies for gender and minority groups, with scholarship support available	Focus on the Muslim community; limited gender inclusivity in leadership roles
6	Rule of Law	Guided by national education law and internal academic regulations	Guided primarily by Islamic law and local customs, with limited external regulation
7	Effectiveness & Efficiency	Use of a quality assurance system (LAMDIK/BAN-PT) and implementation of e-campus	Operates on a traditional system with less emphasis on measurable performance outcomes
8	Sustainability	Supported by government funding and external academic partnerships	Relies heavily on community donations and religious endowments (waqf)

D. CONCLUSION

Digital transformation has proven to be a key element in revitalizing work culture in educational institutions, particularly within the framework of Good Institutional Governance (GIG). A comparative study of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) at UIN Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia, and educational institutions in southern Thailand shows that digitizing work processes significantly increases the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of academic and administrative governance. However, the effectiveness of implementing digital transformation depends heavily on infrastructure readiness, institutional policies, and the ability of human resources to adapt to technological changes. FITK Walisongo has integrated digitalization into various academic and administrative processes. In Southern Thailand, regulatory factors and technological readiness present challenges to implementing digital governance. Digital transformation is a fundamental strategy for building a more adaptive, collaborative, and data-driven work culture, not just a technological innovation. The effective implementation of GIG through digitalization can increase the competitiveness of educational institutions when facing global challenges and ensure more transparent, participatory, and sustainable governance. Therefore, the government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders must collaborate to optimize the use of technology in strengthening educational institution governance. Digital transformation at FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang and Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani has significantly contributed to creating a more efficient and accountable work culture. However, further development is needed to achieve full implementation of good university governance, especially at Ma'had Darul Ma'arif Al Fathani. Digital transformation provides an important foundation for increasing transparency, participation, and accountability in managing educational institutions in the digital era. Additionally, both institutions have implemented accountability and clarity of work responsibilities, albeit with different approaches. FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang has a more advanced accountability system that uses digital technology to monitor and evaluate performance. Each organizational level has clear, accountable tasks through a transparent system. Furthermore, employees of both institutions are committed to quickly responding to the needs of students and the public through integrated academic and administrative digital services. E-learning platforms and online communication channels enable efficient interaction, and web-based information systems provide easier, more responsive access to services.

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