

Mail management procedures in the general affairs division of Surakarta City Regional Secretariat

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui prosedur pengelolaan surat masuk dan surat keluar di Bagian Umum Sekretariat Daerah Kota Surakarta. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data yang digunakan dalam penelitian adalah informan, tempat dan peristiwa, serta dokumentasi. Teknik sampling yang digunakan adalah purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan yaitu dengan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Validitas data yang digunakan adalah validitas internal dan validitas eksternal. Sedangkan analisis data yang digunakan yaitu dengan model analisis interaktif. Hasil penelitian: (1) Pengelolaan surat di Sekretariat Daerah Kota Surakarta berlangsung efektif, efisien, dan akuntabel melalui pembagian tugas yang jelas, dukungan regulasi, penerapan sistem digital, serta mekanisme disposisi berjenjang yang mencerminkan prinsip good governance, (2) Kendala yang dirasakan di Bagian Umum Sekretariat Daerah Kota Surakarta adalah kurangnya pemahaman Masyarakat terhadap alur dan kewenangan antar bagian, (3) Bagian Umum Sekretariat Daerah Kota Surakarta perlu menerapkan strategi komprehensif berbasis sosialisasi, digitalisasi, dan evaluasi berkala untuk membangun layanan persuratan yang efisien, transparan, dan responsif.

Kata Kunci: administrasi; pemerintah; pelayanan

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the procedures for managing incoming and outgoing mail in the General Affairs Division of the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed. Data sources included key informants, direct observation of events and locations, and relevant documentation. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants. Data collection techniques comprised interviews, observation, and document analysis. Internal and external validity assessments ensured data credibility. The interactive analysis model guided data analysis. The findings revealed that: (1) Mail management at the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat operates effectively, efficiently, and accountably through clear task distribution, regulatory support, digital system implementation, and a tiered

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disposition mechanism reflecting good governance principles; (2) The primary obstacle identified was the public's insufficient understanding of mail routing procedures and jurisdictional boundaries between divisions; and (3) The General Affairs Division should implement a comprehensive strategy incorporating public outreach, digitalization, and periodic evaluation to establish efficient, transparent, and responsive mail services.

Keywords: administration; government; services

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Introduction

Correspondence serves as a vital written communication tool supporting administrative activities in both governmental and private institutions. As an official documentation medium, mail functions as authentic evidence for information transmission and provides a foundation for institutional decision-making. Arifin and Latif (2020) emphasized that mail handling constitutes a fundamental aspect of maintaining information integrity required by organizations. When managed inadequately, correspondence accumulates, becomes misplaced, or proves difficult to retrieve, thereby impeding operational effectiveness and reflecting deficient administrative management. Disorganized or accumulated mail creates disorder that disrupts workplace comfort and diminishes productivity. Consequently, effective and efficient mail management is essential for institutional operational continuity.

Furthermore, poorly organized correspondence significantly complicates information retrieval processes. When previously archived mail is required, the search process becomes time-consuming, and documents may remain unlocated entirely. Such circumstances increase workload burdens and reduce institutional efficiency. Therefore, each institution must establish a clear and reliable mail management system ensuring documents are readily accessible when needed.

Incoming and outgoing mail management within institutions ideally follows systematic procedures. According to Sedianingsih (2010), incoming mail management encompasses reception, examination, recording, routing, processing, and archiving stages. Outgoing mail must proceed through drafting, authorization, numbering, dispatch, and archive storage phases. These procedures not only maintain administrative order but also facilitate tracking of officially communicated information between work units or external parties.

The Surakarta City Government regulates mail management through Mayoral Regulation (Perwali) Number 15AA of 2011 concerning Official Document Administration Guidelines. Articles 5 and 6 of this regulation stipulate that incoming mail must be classified, distributed to relevant units, and archived systematically, while outgoing mail must undergo authorization by competent officials, administrative control, and archive storage within respective work units. These provisions demonstrate the importance of well-documented mail governance for ensuring bureaucratic accountability.

In practice, individual institutions possess distinct structures and systems for handling correspondence. Mail management functions typically involve several personnel, including record keepers, archivists, and dispatch officers. However, at the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat, three employees manage correspondence without specialized role differentiation, handling tasks from reception and recording to distribution and archiving. This situation underscores the necessity for efficient governance despite limited resources and highlights the importance of adaptable human resources capable of managing complex administrative procedures.

According to Handoko (2011), records management is defined as a process involving planning, organizing, directing, and supervising organizational members' efforts to achieve

organizational objectives. Records management has become increasingly significant in modern contexts, as it enables organizations to maintain document integrity, accessibility, and accountability. In the era of digital transformation and Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) implementation, records management must also address digital records, interoperability, and good governance principles including transparency, accountability, and efficiency (Makmur, 2023; Hidayati & Srimoelianto, 2023; Azizah et al., 2025).

The planning process in records management requires organizations to formulate objectives, strategies, and tactics necessary for achieving institutional vision and mission while adhering to national and international archival standards, such as ISO 15489 (Novelawaty & Herawan, 2024). Organization within correspondence systems ensures that human resources, infrastructure, and technology are optimally utilized through clear organizational structures, explicit task distribution, and integrated electronic correspondence systems. Without proper organization and systems, correspondence activity coordination becomes ineffective, and mail management objectives may be compromised, particularly within digital and modern governmental contexts.

Based on this urgency, this study was conducted to examine incoming and outgoing mail management procedures in the General Affairs Division of the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat comprehensively. This research also identified encountered obstacles and efforts undertaken to address correspondence system challenges. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to public administration scholarship while providing practical recommendations for improving mail management in regional government settings, aligned with the spirit of bureaucratic transparency and efficiency (OECD, 2020; Rahmayani & Widiyanto, 2021). Most public administration and governmental mail governance research addresses correspondence systems within institutions possessing formal organizational structures. However, the context of the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat differs, as management is conducted by limited personnel without role specialization, leaving few studies describing mail management effectiveness under minimal resource conditions.

Research Methods

This research was conducted at the General Affairs Division Office of the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat, located within the Surakarta City Hall complex at Jl. Jend. Sudirman No. 2. This location was selected for its relevance to the research focus on incoming and outgoing mail management, supported by data availability and competent informants. The researcher's prior internship experience at this institution provided adequate access and preliminary understanding. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to holistically describe mail management processes through direct observation, interviews, and documentation.

Data collection utilized both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through structured interviews with relevant informants, including the Head of the Administrative Affairs Subdivision and staff members, selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria. Interview duration averaged 10–15 minutes per informant. Secondary data were acquired through official documents, mail archives, photographs, and other administrative records. Data collection techniques included literature review, field observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The observation period spanned approximately seven months, coinciding with the researcher's internship at the institution. To ensure data validity, internal and external validity tests were applied, reflecting data accuracy from both researcher and participant perspectives. Additionally, to minimize potential bias from the researcher's prior internship at the study location, member checking strategies were employed by requesting informants to review interview results, along with source and method triangulation to compare data from multiple perspectives, thereby maintaining research objectivity.

Data analysis followed the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, comprising three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction filtered information relevant to the research focus, data display organized findings in narrative and supporting document formats, and conclusions were drawn based on patterns emerging from interview and observation results. All procedures were implemented systematically from

location determination and sampling techniques through final analysis to produce valid and beneficial findings.

Results and Discussion

Research Results

Mail management at the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat is divided between the General Affairs Division and the Protocol and Executive Communication Division (Prokompim). The General Affairs Division manages correspondence related to venue permits and internal matters, while Prokompim handles mail addressed directly to the Mayor or leadership. This process is supported by the 'Lapak E' digital system for government agencies, while the general public continues using manual methods.

An informant stated Regarding correspondence governance, we are divided into two divisions. Two divisions handle it: the General Affairs Division and the Prokompim Division. Correspondence governance is predominantly handled by Prokompim because more mail is addressed to the Mayor. In the General Affairs Division, we mostly manage correspondence in the form of venue permits and outgoing mail for positions from assistant regional secretary downward within the secretariat. (Interview excerpt, January 2, 2025)

All mail management processes operate according to Mayoral Regulations, technical guidelines, and well-documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). As stated in an interview Regarding SOPs, all our services have SOPs. We have hundreds of them in the regional secretariat alone hundreds of SOPs. This includes SOPs for correspondence. Incoming mail, outgoing mail they all have (SOPs). We have the handbook, the Mayoral Regulation, including guidelines for document formatting consolidated into one. (Interview excerpt, January 2, 2025)

Each piece of mail is recorded by the front office and subjected to tiered disposition from the Regional Secretary, Deputy Mayor, to the Mayor. An informant explained Usually, those who already understand the flow automatically go directly to Prokompim, because almost 90% of mail entering the regional secretariat is addressed to the Mayor. For the General Affairs Division, 90% of mail relates to internal matters. However, regarding the disposition I mentioned earlier, 100% goes to the General Affairs Division when the venues managed by our division are being borrowed, since not all venues are consolidated under General Affairs. Management is separate. General Affairs manages (venues) in the City Hall complex and official residences. (Interview excerpt)

The dynamics in the disposition process demonstrate that mail management follows an efficient organizational structure aligned with official document administration standards. Generally, no significant obstacles were identified in mail management, as Regional Work Units (OPD) already understand the prevailing system. However, challenges emerged from external parties unfamiliar with proper procedures, such as misdirected mail submissions. These obstacles are administrative in nature, stemming from insufficient public education regarding functional distinctions between the General Affairs Division and Prokompim. As one informant noted There are not many obstacles because many within the OPD already understand (the system and workflow). Additionally, internally we have SOPs that are being followed, and the staff responsible, including the archivist, are already [competent]. Perhaps only the public sometimes still needs correction (their mail) should not go through General Affairs but directly through Prokompim. (Interview excerpt)

This statement indicates that insufficient public bureaucratic literacy constitutes a primary challenge in public administration services, requiring particular attention to clear and targeted information dissemination. To address these obstacles, intensive and sustained public outreach is necessary through print media, digital platforms, and infographics explaining mail classification and routing. One strategic measure requiring implementation is enhanced public outreach regarding applicable correspondence procedures. This outreach can be conducted through information dissemination via infographics, leaflets, and official regional government social media explaining mail type classifications and handling procedures. Consequently, the public can clearly understand jurisdictional distinctions between the General Affairs Division and Prokompim. Public information

management depends substantially on how well the public understands service procedures. Additionally, SOP strengthening through attached mail classifications and flowcharts, along with information technology utilization such as online forms and QR codes, can accelerate public comprehension of the system.

For mitigation strategies to function effectively, periodic monitoring and evaluation are required through public satisfaction surveys, complaint analysis, and internal audits. This is essential to ensure service processes continue improving and remain relevant to public needs. Thus, mail management at the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat can become a model for adaptive, transparent, and participatory service delivery.

Discussion

Correspondence management at the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat is distributed between the General Affairs Division and the Protocol and Executive Communication Division (Prokompim). This division is based on mail type and purpose. The General Affairs Division handles internal mail and venue borrowing requests, while Prokompim manages mail for the Mayor. Technological innovation through the 'Lapak E' digital system was implemented to facilitate Regional Work Units, although the general public continues using manual methods. This practice reflects user needs-based public service segmentation as described by Bertot et al. (2020), supporting good governance principles regarding institutional function differentiation (OECD, 2020).

The legal aspects of mail management are grounded in Mayoral Regulations and orderly SOPs. All procedures follow technical guidelines and tiered disposition mechanisms from the Regional Secretary to the Mayor before transfer to implementing units. This system supports bureaucratic accountability and efficiency, consistent with accountable governance principles (Rohman, 2020) and responsive governance frameworks (Osborne & Gaebler, 2021). These procedures strengthen standardized and digitally-based regional government administration (Mayoral Regulation Surakarta, 2021).

Although internal processes function well, obstacles persist from parties external to the institution. Many members of the public do not understand jurisdictional distinctions between divisions, causing mail to frequently reach incorrect destinations and require manual clarification. This phenomenon reflects insufficient bureaucratic literacy among the public. Kurniawan and Zain (2021) stated that inadequate public understanding of bureaucratic procedures constitutes a primary barrier in public service delivery. This issue impacts overall service time and efficiency (Widodo, 2023).

To address these obstacles, enhanced public outreach regarding correspondence procedures is required through infographics, leaflets, social media, and other digital channels. This aligns with findings from Rahmayani and Widiyanto (2021) and Handayani et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of effective communication strategies in delivering public services. Furthermore, SOP updates should be more adaptive and communicative, as suggested by Putra et al. (2020) and Wulandari and Fatmawati (2021), consistent with ISO 9001:2015 service governance standards (BNPSDM, 2023).

Simple digitalization is also recommended, including QR code usage, online forms, and FAQ pages to facilitate information access. Wahyudi and Sari (2022) noted that lightweight digitalization significantly helps clarify information for the public, aligned with the Electronic-Based Government System program (KemenPANRB, 2022). All these initiatives require ongoing evaluation support through satisfaction surveys, service complaints, and internal audits. Efendi (2020) and Pratama and Nugroho (2021) emphasized the importance of public feedback in formulating adaptive and trustworthy service policies (Putri, 2022). Through this integrated strategy, mail management at the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat can become an administrative model that is responsive, participatory, and data-driven.

Conclusion

Incoming and outgoing mail management in the General Affairs Division of the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat has been implemented professionally and systematically through clear task distribution between the General Affairs Division and Prokompim, supported by legal foundations, SOPs, and digital innovations such as the Lapak E system to enhance service efficiency. These findings confirm that internal mechanisms align with good governance principles and effectively support organizational performance. Although internal procedures function well, external obstacles remain, namely insufficient public understanding of correspondence procedures, resulting in mail submission errors. This implies that public administration governance success depends not only on internal systems but also on public literacy and active participation. Therefore, mitigation strategies are directed toward enhanced public outreach, adaptive SOP revision, information technology optimization, and periodic evaluation to ensure responsive and accountable service delivery. This approach reflects the application of good governance, adaptive bureaucracy, and smart governance principles in inclusive public administration oriented toward community needs. This study's limitation is its scope, focusing exclusively on the General Affairs Division of the Surakarta City Regional Secretariat, precluding generalization to other institutions with different characteristics. Accordingly, future researchers are recommended to expand studies to other regional government institutions and employ quantitative approaches to obtain more comprehensive findings.

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