

Abuse of Authority in The Provision of Public Services

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Abstract

This journal article analyses the abuse of power in digital surveillance, focusing on the case of the Ministry of Communications and Digital (Komdigi) providing protection to online gambling sites. This research uses the literature study method to understand the mechanism of abuse of power and its supporting factors. The main findings show that weaknesses in internal controls and high financial incentives are the main drivers of this action. In addition, the development of digital technology creates new loopholes that are difficult to monitor using traditional methods. Analyses based on the theories of Utilitarianism, Virtue and Deontology Ethics reveal that these actions violate basic ethical principles, such as integrity, justice and public responsibility. Strategic recommendations include strengthening technology-based supervision, developing ethical competence of public officials, and adaptive regulation for the digital sector. This journal article is expected to serve as a reference in improving digital surveillance governance to prevent similar cases in the future.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of public services is one of the main pillars in building transparent, accountable and integrity governance. Good public services will support the achievement of public trust in government institutions. However, in practice, there are still frequent abuses of authority by public officials, which have implications for state losses, decreased service quality, and damage to the image of the institution. One form of abuse of authority that has emerged is the involvement of public officials in illegal activities, such as the protection of online gambling sites. online gambling sites, as happened in a case involving the Ministry of Communications and Digital (Komdigi).

Previous literature reviews have discussed maladministration in public services and abuse of authority. For example, research conducted by Prasojo et al. (2019) shows that weaknesses in internal control are often the main cause of maladministration. Meanwhile, a study by Kusuma & Santoso (2021) highlighted the importance of implementing a risk management system in anticipating abuse of office by public officials. On the other hand, research related to information technology, as revealed by Pratama (2022), confirms that supervision in the digital sector requires stricter control mechanisms to prevent maladministration. digital sector requires stricter control mechanisms to prevent abuse by responsible authorities.

This article offers scholarly novelty by specifically examining abuse of power in the context of protecting online gambling sites, which is a new phenomenon in the digitalisation era. Unlike previous studies that mostly highlighted maladministration in the

management of physical or financial resources, this article focuses on ethical violations in the monitoring of digital content.

The research problem posed is how abuse of power by public officials can occur in the context of digital surveillance, as well as what factors allow such actions to go undetected for a long time. It is hypothesised that weaknesses in internal controls and the presence of high financial incentives are the main drivers of abuse of power in this case.

The purpose of this study is to analyse a case of abuse of power involving a KOMDIGI employee protecting an online gambling site, understand the mechanisms used in the act, and offer strategic recommendations to prevent future recurrences.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This article uses the literature study method to explore information and understand the phenomenon of abuse of authority in the context of public services, especially in digital surveillance. The data produced is in the form of words or descriptions obtained by relying on various literature from library data collection, reading, and notes. Literature studies aim to develop theoretical aspects and practical aspects, where this literature study is used to find a theoretical basis, framework and find research hypotheses. In the literature study approach, the bibliography is generally a secondary source and not original first-hand data, the data is ready-made, and library data is not limited by space and time.

The use of this literature study by searching for books and scientific articles to collect data relevant to the research topic. Danial and Warsiah (2009: 80), literature study is research conducted by researchers by collecting a number of books, magazines related to research problems and objectives. Researchers by collecting a number of books, magazines related to research problems and objectives. Literature study research relies on written sources that are relevant to certain research topics. The use of this literature study aims to, find a problem to research, find relevant information, review theories on the problem under study to make theoretical and empirical descriptions related to factors, indicators and variables, deepen researchers' knowledge of problems in their fields, and help build a theoretical framework underlying the research. This method is carried out in the following stages:

a. Identification of Literature Sources:

1. Primary sources were scientific journals, academic books, legal documents, official reports, and news articles from trusted online media such as Suara.com (Aditya, 2024; Nurhadi, 2024), IDN Times (Fathurohman, 2024), and Tempo (Ristiyanti, 2024).
2. This study also uses references from previous research, such as Prasajo et al. (2019) on maladministration in public services, Kusuma & Santoso (2021) on risk management, and Pratama (2022) on supervisory challenges in the digital sector.

b. Literature Data Collection:

1. Collect literature sources based on relevant topics, such as Utilitarianism, Virtue, and Deontology Ethics theories.
2. Focus on literature that addresses abuse of power in the context of digitalisation and public surveillance.

The object of this research focuses on the Ministry of Communication and Digital (Komdigi) agencies involved in cases of abuse of authority in digital content supervision. The object of research includes cases of abuse of authority by Komdigi that provide protection to online gambling sites.

The data used in this study are secondary data obtained through:

- a. Documentation: Collecting data from news, online media reports, legal documents, and relevant legislation.

- b. Literature Study: Conducting an in-depth study of scientific journals, books, and articles that discuss maladministration theory, good governance, and digital surveillance.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This article reveals a number of important findings related to the phenomenon of abuse of power in digital surveillance. One of the main findings is the abuse of power by public officials, such as the employees of the Ministry of Communications and Digital (Komdigi). Their actions in protecting online gambling sites reveal significant gaps in internal oversight of the digital sector. This reflects the failure of institutions to ensure transparent and accountable governance.

This phenomenon can occur due to weaknesses in internal controls that provide room for illegal actions to take place undetected. The lack of adequate risk management practices exacerbates this situation. In addition, high financial incentives create a strong motivation for public officials to violate their professional code of ethics. This finding is in line with the maladministration theory proposed by Prasojito et al. (2019), which states that failures in internal control are often the main cause of abuse of authority.

In the context of the digital era, the trend of abuse of authority is increasing because technological developments are often faster than existing regulations. This creates loopholes that can be exploited by irresponsible parties. Digital transformation creates new challenges, where monitoring digital content requires a different approach than monitoring physical resources. Digital technologies provide broad access but also pose new risks, including abuse of authority. As described by Pratama (2022), the digital sector requires technology-based controls that can monitor activities in real-time to mitigate these risks.

This research provides novelty by specifically examining the abuse of authority in digital surveillance. This study supports the findings of Prasojito et al. (2019) on the importance of internal control and extends those findings by highlighting the challenges in the digital sector. In addition, the findings are relevant to Pratama's (2022) research, which emphasises the need for strict controls in the digital sector to prevent abuse.

This abuse of power not only harms public trust in public institutions but also creates far-reaching economic and social impacts. The protection of online gambling sites can increase illegal activities that damage the morale and economic stability of society. In the long run, these actions can undermine the integrity of public institutions as a whole. People lose trust in government institutions, which adversely affects the legitimacy and stability of government.

If analysed based on the theory of Utilitarianism Ethics, this action goes against the principle of 'greatest happiness for the greatest number.' The protection of online gambling sites only benefits a few parties, such as officials who receive financial incentives and users of gambling sites, while the wider community is harmed by the economic, moral and social impacts. These actions do not create collective benefits, but only worsen the welfare of society as a whole. Komdigi's abuse of power caused a consequence of its actions in the form of harm. As a result of this abuse, public trust decreased, people began to doubt the protection provided by the government, not to mention some loss of funds, and the employees involved had to receive prison sentences and pay heavy fines.

From the perspective of the Virtues and Virtues Theory, the abuse of authority shows the failure of public officials to apply virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and integrity. Aristotle argued that ethical actions should reflect moral virtues. This theory of virtue ethics does not refer to an actual behaviour or activity to achieve the value of goodness, but rather refers to the development of one's own personality or character. In this case, the actions of public officials not only reflect a lack of such virtues but also demonstrate an inability to

carry out their responsibilities to society. Therefore, the application of virtue ethics can be used to shape the character of the perpetrators to be better by coaching the perpetrators. To be better by providing guidance to the perpetrators. Character development through ethics education and moral training is a very important step to prevent similar actions in the future, by preventing the causes of the escape of employees who guard online gambling sites.

According to the Deontological Ethical Theory popularised by Immanuel Kant, the actions of officials protecting online gambling sites clearly violate their moral obligations as public servants. Kant proposed the concept of categorical imperative, which means acting in accordance with principles that can be made into universal laws. In this context, protecting online gambling sites cannot be justified under any circumstances, as it goes against universal moral principles such as justice, integrity and responsibility to society. Therefore, this action is not only legally wrong but also ethically wrong.

As a follow-up, this research recommends several strategic steps to prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future. Firstly, strengthening the internal control system is essential. This can be done by implementing a technology-based risk management system to detect and prevent abuse of authority more effectively. Transparency and accountability in digital content monitoring also need to be improved through the involvement of independent third parties. Second, the development of ethical competence for public officials is a crucial step. Ethics and integrity training should be part of the capacity building programme for public officials to increase moral awareness and professional responsibility.

Furthermore, regulations in the digital sector need to be strengthened. Regulations that are adaptive to technological developments should be developed to reduce legal loopholes that can be utilised for illegal acts. Technologies such as artificial intelligence should also be adopted to monitor digital activities in real time. Finally, strict sanctions should be imposed on public officials involved in abuse of authority as a form of deterrence and learning for others. Like the Komdigi officials who were charged with multiple articles. Starting from Article 303 of the Criminal Code and / or Article 27 paragraph (2) of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions and / or Article 3, Article 4, Article 4, and Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia.

Electronic and/or Article 3, Article 4, Article 5 of Law Number 8 of 2010 on the Prevention and Eradication of Money Laundering Crimes in conjunction with Articles 55 and 56 of the Criminal Code. With these measures, it is hoped that digital surveillance governance can be improved so that similar cases do not recur in the future.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This journal article identifies the main causes of abuse of power in digital surveillance as weaknesses in internal controls and large financial incentives. The findings support the hypothesis that surveillance gaps and financial motives are the main drivers of illegal actions in the digital sector. This phenomenon shows that the development of digital technology presents new challenges that require adaptive and technology-based oversight mechanisms.

Ethically, these acts of abuse of authority contradict the principles of Utilitarianism, Virtue and Deontology Ethics. Under Utilitarianism Ethics, this act harms society at large with significant moral and economic impacts. Under Virtue Theory, these actions demonstrate a failure to apply the values of integrity and responsibility. From a Deontological perspective, these actions violate the universal principle of moral obligation that public officials must uphold.

To address these challenges, recommended strategic measures include strengthening technology-based internal controls, developing ethical competencies for public officials,

and strengthening digital sector regulations. Follow-up journal articles could focus on the development of more sophisticated surveillance technologies and effective ethics education approaches for public officials. With these measures, it is expected that public sector governance can be more transparent, accountable and adaptive to the times.

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