

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAM IN PALEMBANG CITY

RUSDI

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH JAKARTA, INDONESIA, EMAIL: rusdi@student.umj.ac.id

ANDRIANSYAH

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH JAKARTA, INDONESIA, EMAIL: andriansyah@umj.ac.id

RAHMAT SALAM

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH JAKARTA, INDONESIA, EMAIL: rahmat.salam@umj.ac.id

EVI SATISPI

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH JAKARTA, INDONESIA, EMAIL: evi.satispi@umj.ac.id

AZHARI AZIZ SAMUDRA

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH JAKARTA, INDONESIA, EMAIL: prof.arisamudra@gmail.com

SRY MULYA KURNIATI

STIA & P ADS PALEMBANG, INDONESIA, EMAIL: srykurniati18@gmail.com

DELFI AZI PUJI LESTARI

STIA & P ADS PALEMBANG, INDONESIA, EMAIL: drdelfiads@gmail.com

Abstract

Poverty remains a persistent challenge in Palembang City despite sustained national and local efforts through programs such as *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH), *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* (BLT), and community empowerment initiatives. This study analyzes the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in Palembang using Van Meter and Van Horn's (1975) policy implementation model, which identifies six interrelated variables influencing execution: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication, characteristics of implementing agencies, implementers' dispositions, and the socio-political environment. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving stakeholders from the *Dinas Sosial*, *BAPPEDA*, sub-district offices, village leaders, program facilitators, and beneficiaries. Findings reveal that while policy objectives are aligned with national strategies, operational clarity at the grassroots level is insufficient, with vague technical guidelines and delays in information flow. Resource constraints including budget delays, inadequate staffing, and limited digital infrastructure hamper program delivery. Communication among agencies is fragmented, leading to data silos and beneficiary targeting errors. Institutional capacity gaps are evident at the sub-district and village levels, exacerbated by frequent staff rotations and insufficient training. Although implementers display strong commitment, their technical understanding of policy mechanisms varies widely. The socio-political environment marked by political interference, low public awareness, and community distrust further constrains effectiveness. The study concludes that structural, institutional, and contextual barriers collectively undermine the impact of well-formulated poverty reduction policies. Recommendations include clarifying operational guidelines, enhancing capacity-building efforts, integrating data systems, strengthening inter-agency coordination, and fostering participatory community engagement to improve transparency and program legitimacy. The findings contribute both theoretically and practically to understanding policy implementation in urban poverty contexts, offering insights applicable to other Indonesian cities facing similar governance and socio-economic challenges.

Keywords: policy implementation, poverty alleviation, Van Meter and Van Horn model, urban governance, Palembang City

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most complex and persistent development challenges in Indonesia, including in urban centers such as Palembang City. Despite continued economic growth and the rollout of various national and local poverty reduction programs, significant portions of the population still live below or near the poverty line. According to data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS, 2024), the poverty rate in Palembang hovered around 11.2%, indicating that a substantial number of citizens still struggle to meet basic needs such as food, housing, education, and healthcare. While poverty alleviation has long been a priority in public policy, implementation effectiveness remains questionable, particularly at the regional and municipal levels.

In response to this issue, the Indonesian government has launched numerous programs such as the *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH), *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* (BLT), *Raskin/Rastra* (rice for the poor), and social entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at empowering vulnerable communities. At the local level, the Palembang City Government has also introduced poverty alleviation efforts in alignment with national strategies. However, discrepancies in execution, coordination, and monitoring have been repeatedly identified. This raises the critical question: why do well-designed policies not always lead to desired outcomes on the ground?

The answer to this problem may lie in the complexity of policy implementation. As Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) argue, the success or failure of a public policy often hinges not merely on its formulation but on how it is implemented. Their policy implementation model identifies six interrelated variables that influence the effectiveness of policy execution: (1) policy standards and objectives, (2) resources, (3) inter-organizational communication and enforcement, (4) characteristics of implementing agencies, (5) dispositions of implementers, and (6) the external environment. These six variables serve as lenses to assess the alignment between policy intentions and actual outcomes.

Using this model, one can better understand the structural and behavioral dimensions of policy implementation, particularly in complex policy fields like poverty alleviation. Research by Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) supports this notion by emphasizing that successful implementation is conditional upon clearly defined goals, sufficient financial and human resources, and coherent support systems across stakeholders.

Several empirical studies have attempted to examine the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in Indonesia. For instance, research by Marwiyah (2022) in Central Java found that ineffective coordination among stakeholders and poor monitoring mechanisms weakened the impact of poverty programs. Similarly, Handayani (2021) showed that in North Sumatra, despite adequate funding, miscommunication between agencies and weak community engagement led to sub-optimal outcomes. In the context of Palembang, a study by Firmansyah (2023) reported that although the local government had implemented PKH and other initiatives in line with national strategies, issues such as overlapping responsibilities, limited technical capacity of field officers, and inadequate data synchronization hindered program effectiveness.

Furthermore, the political and socio-cultural environment often plays a critical role. In Palembang, the involvement of local leaders, neighborhood associations (*RT/RW*), and community-based organizations is essential in identifying eligible beneficiaries and ensuring sustained support. However, politicization of aid distribution, lack of transparency, and resistance to program innovations may compromise the integrity of such efforts.

Van Meter and Van Horn's model allows for a systematic dissection of these issues. For example, when policy standards and objectives are too vague, implementing agents lack direction. When resources, both financial and human are insufficient or unevenly distributed, service delivery falters. When communication between the Social Affairs Office (*Dinas Sosial*), BAPPEDA, sub-district (*kecamatan*) authorities, and field officers is weak, duplication or neglect may occur. The attitudes of implementers whether they are motivated, trained, and committed also significantly affect how effectively policies are translated into action. Moreover, the dynamic external environment characterized by economic fluctuations, political pressures, and community resistance can dramatically influence the pace and integrity of implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, altered the entire ecosystem of poverty programming, forcing implementers to pivot strategies rapidly. These externalities must be considered in any serious policy implementation analysis.

Despite the growing body of literature on poverty policy in Indonesia, few studies have specifically applied the Van Meter and Van Horn model to analyze how poverty alleviation programs are implemented in Palembang City. This study thus fills a critical gap in both academic literature and practical policymaking. By employing a theoretically grounded yet contextually nuanced framework, it allows for a deep exploration of the factors that support or obstruct policy success in the local context.

In summary, while poverty remains a pressing issue in Palembang, the quality of implementation is often the missing link between policy design and actual impact. By investigating the implementation process through Van Meter and Van Horn's lens, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the operational realities, institutional barriers, and human dynamics that shape the outcomes of poverty alleviation programs. Such insights are essential for developing more effective, equitable, and sustainable strategies in the fight against poverty—not only in Palembang but potentially in other urban centers across Indonesia. The primary objective of this study is to analyze how the six variables proposed by Van Meter and Van Horn influence the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in Palembang City. Specifically, the research aims to identify key enabling and inhibiting

factors at each stage of the implementation process, assess the alignment between policy objectives and outcomes, and offer practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving the effectiveness of local poverty reduction initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Policy Implementation

Policy implementation refers to the processes and actions through which formulated policies are translated into practice to achieve their intended objectives. According to Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), implementation is the interaction between the setting of goals and the actions geared toward achieving them. It is not merely a technical-administrative phase but a dynamic and often political process involving multiple actors, institutions, and contextual factors. Scholars like Hill and Hupe (2002) argue that implementation is influenced not only by the clarity of policy but also by the capabilities of the implementers and the complexity of inter-organizational coordination.

The top-down and bottom-up dichotomy in implementation studies further enriches the discourse. The top-down perspective, as outlined by Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), emphasizes the role of decision-makers at the highest levels and the clarity of policy directives. In contrast, the bottom-up perspective, introduced by Lipsky (1980) through his concept of "street-level bureaucrats," highlights the discretion and practical judgment of field-level implementers. Both approaches are important in understanding the real-world complexities of policy execution, particularly in social programs such as poverty alleviation, which require both centralized coordination and localized adaptability.

2.2 Van Meter and Van Horn Policy Implementation Model

The central theoretical framework of this study is the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) model of policy implementation. This model emphasizes six key variables that determine the effectiveness of policy execution:

1. **Policy standards and objectives:** The clarity, consistency, and measurability of a policy's goals.
2. **Resources:** The availability of financial, human, and technological resources required for implementation.
3. **Inter-organizational communication and enforcement:** The degree of coordination and collaboration between implementing bodies.
4. **Characteristics of implementing agencies:** Institutional structures, culture, and management capacity.
5. **Dispositions of implementers:** Knowledge, understanding, and commitment of those executing the policy.
6. **External socioeconomic and political conditions:** The broader environment influencing policy success, including political will, economic stability, and public support.

This framework is particularly suitable for analyzing complex policies like poverty reduction because it integrates structural, institutional, and human behavior components. A study by Grindle (1980) supported the use of such multidimensional models, arguing that implementation failure is rarely the result of a single variable but rather a combination of interrelated factors.

2.3 Poverty Alleviation Policies in Urban Indonesia

Indonesia has long grappled with the multifaceted nature of poverty, and numerous programs have been introduced over the past decades. Studies such as Suryahadi et al. (2012) demonstrated that targeted social assistance programs like *BLT* and *PKH* significantly reduced short-term poverty but often failed to generate sustainable economic mobility. Other scholars, like Sumarto and Bazzi (2011), argue that a dependency effect can emerge when programs are not coupled with empowerment and capacity-building components.

Urban poverty presents unique challenges due to higher living costs, informal labor markets, and urban sprawl. Research by Firman (2004) highlights that urbanization without adequate planning and inclusive policies leads to widening inequality. In cities like Palembang, urban poverty is not only about income deprivation but also about poor housing conditions, lack of access to education and healthcare, and limited social safety nets.

2.4 Factors Affecting Policy Implementation: Empirical Findings

Numerous empirical studies have reinforced the complexity of implementing poverty alleviation programs in decentralized governance systems like Indonesia's. For instance, Rahardjo (2018) found that in East Java, bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of reliable beneficiary data reduced the effectiveness of aid distribution. In Yogyakarta, Mardiyanto (2020) showed that successful implementation of *PKH* was contingent on strong community facilitation, transparent data management, and active monitoring.

A study by Syukri et al. (2017) emphasized that participatory approaches, such as involving community leaders and local NGOs, enhance both the legitimacy and the outcomes of poverty programs. These findings align with the "collaborative governance" approach proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007), which asserts that inclusive stakeholder engagement leads to better program delivery. Moreover, Widianingsih and Morrell (2007) noted that decentralization in Indonesia often results in uneven capacities among local governments, with some regions excelling while others lag due to limited administrative and financial resources. This variation is particularly visible in cities like Palembang, where poverty alleviation programs may suffer from inconsistent implementation across districts (*kecamatan*) and sub-districts (*kelurahan*).

2.5 The Role of Local Government in Policy Execution

Local governments serve as the frontline actors in implementing national poverty alleviation strategies. As noted by Turner et al. (2009), decentralization allows for policies to be tailored to local contexts, but it also requires strong institutional capacity, inter-agency collaboration, and accountability mechanisms. In Indonesia, the effectiveness of local government action is often contingent upon the quality of coordination between agencies such as the *Dinas Sosial*, *BAPPEDA*, and village-level administrative structures. Sujarwoto and Tampubolon (2015) suggest that innovation in local governance, such as digital poverty data systems and integrated service centers can improve targeting accuracy and service delivery. However, the lack of such innovations in many regions leads to duplication of efforts and exclusion errors.

2.6 Gaps in Existing Literature

While the existing body of literature offers valuable insights into both theoretical and practical aspects of policy implementation and poverty alleviation in Indonesia, several gaps remain: 1) Few studies apply a structured policy implementation framework like Van Meter and Van Horn's specifically to urban poverty contexts in secondary cities such as Palembang, 2) Most research focuses on program outputs or short-term impacts, rather than exploring how implementation processes unfold across multiple actors and levels, 3) There is limited exploration of the behavioral dimensions of implementers, including their commitment, understanding, and interactions with target communities and 4) Inter-organizational dynamics and communication flows in local governance structures remain underexplored.

This study addresses these gaps by employing Van Meter and Van Horn's model to conduct an in-depth analysis of how poverty alleviation programs are implemented in Palembang City. Through this approach, the research seeks not only to understand what works or fails, but also why and how these outcomes emerge, offering both theoretical and practical contributions to the field.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in Palembang City using the theoretical framework of Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation model (1975). The qualitative design is considered suitable for this study as it enables the researcher to explore complex social phenomena in depth, especially the dynamics of policy execution, stakeholder interactions, and contextual influences that are not easily captured through quantitative measures. As stated by Creswell (2014), qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of the meanings individuals assign to a particular issue in this case, the gap between policy intentions and real-world outcomes in the implementation of poverty reduction programs.

The focus of the research lies in analyzing how the six variables proposed by Van Meter and Van Horn namely policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication and coordination, characteristics of implementing agencies, dispositions of implementers, and the socioeconomic-political environment affect the success or failure of poverty alleviation efforts in Palembang. These variables are treated as analytical categories that guide the design, data collection, and interpretation stages of the study.

The research was conducted in Palembang City, South Sumatra, Indonesia, a regional urban center with a diverse socioeconomic profile and various ongoing poverty reduction programs aligned with national and local government agendas. Research locations included several government agencies, particularly the Dinas Sosial Kota Palembang (Social Affairs Office), BAPPEDA (Regional Development Planning Agency), as well as selected subdistricts (*kecamatan*) and urban villages (*kelurahan*) where the implementation of programs such as PKH (Program Keluarga Harapan) and food assistance initiatives are actively taking place.

Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and field notes, while secondary data were obtained from official documents, policy guidelines, implementation reports, program evaluations, and relevant research publications. The triangulation of these multiple data sources was intended to enhance the reliability and depth of the findings. To obtain primary data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in policy implementation. These included government officials from Dinas Sosial and BAPPEDA, subdistrict heads (*camat*), village leaders (*lurah*), field facilitators of PKH, and selected community beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programs. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in probing deeper into issues while maintaining consistency across interview sessions. Non-participant observation was also carried out to document real-time implementation practices, inter-agency coordination meetings, and interactions between implementers and the community. In addition, a thorough document analysis was conducted, involving the review of technical guidelines, strategic plans, monitoring reports, and data records to support and validate interview and observational data.

The data collected were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which involves three concurrent processes: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, raw data were organized and reduced through coding, with categories derived from the six variables of Van Meter and Van Horn's framework. The second stage involved visualizing and presenting data in matrices and narrative summaries to identify patterns, contrasts, and causal relationships. In the final stage, the researcher drew

conclusions and verified them through repeated reference to the data and through triangulation across different sources and methods.

The instruments used in the research included an interview guide, designed based on Van Meter and Van Horn's variables, as well as observation checklists and document review templates. All instruments were pre-tested to ensure they were clear, relevant, and aligned with the study's objectives. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research, several validation techniques were applied following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. These included data triangulation (across sources and methods), member checking (by asking informants to validate findings), peer debriefing (to receive feedback from academic colleagues), and maintaining an audit trail (to document all research activities and analytical decisions).

The study also upheld strict ethical standards. All participants were provided with clear information about the study and their informed consent was obtained before data collection. The anonymity and confidentiality of all respondents were preserved by assigning codes to their names and positions. The researcher ensured that no harm physical, psychological, or social would result from participation. Additionally, the research was approved by the ethics committee of the relevant academic institution to ensure full compliance with institutional and national research ethics protocols.

In conclusion, this methodological design provides a rigorous and comprehensive framework for examining how poverty alleviation policies are implemented in Palembang City. It not only allows for a detailed assessment of each implementation variable but also uncovers the nuanced realities of field-level execution, inter-agency coordination, and citizen experiences. The findings from this research are expected to generate valuable insights that contribute to both academic discourse and practical improvements in poverty policy implementation.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the research findings and discusses them in relation to the theoretical framework of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), which identifies six key variables influencing policy implementation. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving relevant stakeholders in Palembang City. Each subsection below is organized according to the six variables of the model, followed by an integrated discussion of how these variables interact in the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in the city.

1) Clarity of Policy Standards and Objectives

The first finding indicates that the objectives of poverty alleviation programs in Palembang are generally consistent with national directives, particularly in relation to the PKH program, food aid (*bantuan pangan*), and community empowerment schemes. However, field-level actors reported ambiguity in operationalizing these goals. Several implementers from subdistrict offices admitted that while they received general instructions from the central and local governments, they lacked clear technical guidelines for implementation at the grassroots level.

For instance, a field facilitator stated:

"The program goals are written in documents, but in the field we often have to interpret them ourselves due to the lack of technical instructions."

This reflects Van Meter and Van Horn's concern that vague or inconsistent policy standards can hinder implementation. As such, while the policy may be conceptually sound, its practical translation suffers from a lack of operational clarity, especially when dealing with complex social issues like multidimensional poverty.

2) Availability and Distribution of Resources

The study found resource limitations to be one of the most critical barriers in policy implementation. Both financial and human resources were reported as inadequate, especially at the sub-district (*kecamatan*) and village (*kelurahan*) levels. Several village heads reported that the budget allocation was often delayed, and the number of trained personnel was insufficient to handle the growing number of program beneficiaries.

In addition, infrastructure limitations such as unreliable internet connections and limited access to digital poverty databases hampered the accuracy and speed of program execution. This aligns with Van Meter and Van Horn's assertion that even well-intentioned policies fail if not supported by adequate resources.

3) Inter-organizational Communication and Coordination

The findings reveal that coordination among implementing agencies such as Dinas Sosial, BAPPEDA, sub-district offices, and community-based organizations was fragmented and inconsistent. Several respondents described the communication flow as "vertical and one-directional," with limited opportunity for feedback or horizontal collaboration.

This lack of inter-agency synergy was particularly evident in data management. Different institutions used non-integrated systems for identifying and verifying beneficiaries, leading to overlapping data, inclusion errors, and exclusion of eligible citizens. Such inefficiencies not only undermine the quality of services but also foster mistrust among target groups. These findings are consistent with Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), who emphasize the need for strong institutional linkages in complex policy networks. Without a coherent communication mechanism, the risk of policy failure increases significantly.

4) Characteristics and Capacity of Implementing Agencies

The implementing agencies in Palembang exhibited varied levels of institutional capacity. At the city level, the Dinas Sosial and BAPPEDA had relatively well-established administrative systems and technical staff. However, this strength did not trickle down effectively to the *kecamatan* and *kelurahan* levels, where many implementers lacked adequate training and digital literacy. Moreover, frequent changes in leadership and staff rotations led to inconsistency in program execution. Local leaders expressed concern that program continuity and institutional memory were disrupted by political appointments and administrative turnover. This corroborates Van Meter and Van Horn's emphasis on the importance of organizational characteristics, including stability, competence, and structure, in shaping policy implementation outcomes.

5) Disposition of Implementers

Field-level implementers, including facilitators and social workers, demonstrated a high level of personal commitment and empathy toward the beneficiaries. However, their knowledge of program objectives and procedures varied considerably, depending on the extent of their training and experience.

One field worker noted:

"We want to help the poor sincerely, but sometimes we are not sure what the exact procedures are or whom to prioritize."

Such gaps reflect Van Meter and Van Horn's fifth variable the implementers' understanding and attitude. While positive disposition can drive implementation, it must be accompanied by adequate technical capacity and continuous training to ensure fidelity to policy goals.

6) Socioeconomic and Political Environment

The broader environment in which poverty programs are implemented in Palembang is marked by political interests, bureaucratic competition, and community skepticism. Some stakeholders reported instances where aid distribution was influenced by political affiliations or manipulated for electoral gains. In addition, beneficiaries often lacked understanding of their rights or the criteria for program eligibility, leading to frustration and distrust. On the other hand, the existence of active community organizations, such as neighborhood groups (*RT/RW*), helped in facilitating program dissemination, although their involvement was often informal and underutilized. These contextual factors significantly influenced how the programs were received and perceived at the community level. This supports the assertion by Grindle (1980) and Hill & Hupe (2002) that the implementation environment plays a crucial role in shaping outcomes, either by enabling or constraining the efforts of formal institutions.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study highlight the multifaceted challenges and dynamics involved in the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in Palembang City. Using the framework developed by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), this discussion synthesizes the research results and interprets them through both theoretical and practical lenses. The six interrelated variables policy standards and objectives, resources, communication, implementing agency characteristics, disposition of implementers, and external environment provide a comprehensive structure to understand the successes and limitations of policy execution in this context.

1) Policy Standards and Objectives: Alignment Versus Operational Clarity

One of the fundamental elements in policy implementation is the degree of clarity and consistency in its goals and standards. The research shows that although the poverty alleviation programs in Palembang are aligned with national strategies, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Indonesia's Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN), there remains a significant gap in the operational clarity at the local level. Local implementers, especially at the village and sub-district levels, often struggle to translate broad objectives into measurable actions. This reflects Van Meter and Van Horn's view that ambiguous or abstract goals tend to be interpreted differently across administrative layers, creating fragmentation in implementation.

Additionally, this finding is consistent with the work of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), who argue that the longer the chain of implementation and the more actors involved, the greater the likelihood of policy distortion. In Palembang, technical guidelines were often either too general or received too late, forcing field officers to rely on informal mechanisms or personal discretion, which can lead to inconsistency and inefficiency.

2) Resources: Persistent Shortages Undermining Policy Effectiveness

Effective policy implementation is heavily dependent on the availability of adequate resources financial, human, and infrastructural. This study uncovered persistent resource deficits across all levels of government involved in the implementation process. Budget disbursement delays, limited staff, inadequate training, and outdated infrastructure (e.g., data systems) significantly hampered the delivery of services to poor households.

This aligns with Goggin et al. (1990) and Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980), who emphasize that policies no matter how well designed are unlikely to achieve their goals without sufficient resources. In the case of Palembang, such limitations contributed to implementation bottlenecks, especially in beneficiary identification, monitoring, and evaluation. Furthermore, human resource turnover due to political transitions exacerbated institutional memory loss and disrupted continuity.

3) Communication and Coordination: Fragmented Systems and Data Silos

The quality of inter-organizational communication was found to be inconsistent and often hierarchical, with little opportunity for horizontal collaboration between agencies such as the Dinas Sosial, BAPPEDA, and sub-district

offices. The absence of integrated data systems led to duplication of efforts and confusion over beneficiary eligibility, undermining program integrity and public trust.

Van Meter and Van Horn underscore the importance of communication channels that ensure accurate information transfer between all actors. The findings from Palembang confirm that inadequate coordination and fragmented systems can result in policy misalignment and poor service delivery. These outcomes echo studies by Hill and Hupe (2002) and O'Toole (2000), who argue that governance complexity demands well-structured communication protocols, especially when implementation is multi-sectoral in nature.

The lack of digital integration among different departments also illustrates the importance of digital governance in modern policy implementation. With poverty data often outdated or inconsistent, the risk of inclusion and exclusion errors increases, thereby affecting the legitimacy and effectiveness of the program.

4) Implementing Agency Characteristics: Institutional Capacity Gaps

The characteristics of implementing agencies significantly influence how well a policy is put into practice. In this study, agencies at the city level demonstrated better institutional frameworks and technical expertise. However, at the *kecamatan* and *kelurahan* levels, there was clear evidence of limited capacity, both in terms of human resources and operational autonomy.

Frequent staff rotation and politically motivated appointments led to discontinuity and reduced institutional learning. This observation supports Van Meter and Van Horn's position that organizational capacity defined by stability, hierarchy, and technical ability has a direct effect on policy implementation. The gap between higher-level planning and lower-level execution not only reflects vertical disconnection but also illustrates the challenges in decentralization, where local governments are given responsibility without the corresponding capacity to fulfill them.

5) Disposition of Implementers: Positive Attitudes but Inadequate Knowledge

The field-level implementers demonstrated a generally positive attitude and genuine concern for poverty reduction. However, many lacked a deep understanding of policy procedures, legal frameworks, and technical requirements, especially those who were newly appointed or received minimal training. This discrepancy between willingness and technical capability suggests that attitude alone cannot ensure successful policy implementation. According to Van Meter and Van Horn, the implementers' comprehension of and commitment to policy goals is essential. This finding is also echoed by Matland (1995), who emphasizes that both the cognitive (understanding) and affective (willingness) components of implementers' disposition are necessary. In Palembang, training programs remain sporadic and often non-compulsory, weakening the long-term effectiveness of human capital development within the bureaucracy.

6) Socio-Political Environment: Political Interference and Community Distrust

Finally, the socio-political environment plays a pivotal role in shaping policy outcomes. The study found that political interference in beneficiary selection and aid distribution occasionally occurred, particularly during election periods. Additionally, public awareness of the program's eligibility criteria was low, resulting in mistrust and dissatisfaction among citizens who felt excluded or misinformed.

Van Meter and Van Horn describe such environmental factors as influential yet external to the policy structure itself. However, scholars like Grindle (1980) argue that the environment is not merely a backdrop, but an active determinant of implementation quality. The presence of active civil society organizations in Palembang could be leveraged to improve transparency and feedback mechanisms, but this potential remains underutilized due to the lack of institutionalized collaboration.

7) Synthesis of Key Challenges and Strategic Implications

When analyzed holistically, the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in Palembang City is characterized by systemic weaknesses that span across multiple dimensions of the Van Meter and Van Horn framework. Despite a favorable policy environment and a relatively strong political commitment at the macro level, several structural and procedural gaps hinder the realization of intended outcomes.

To improve the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies, this study recommends a multi-pronged approach:

1) Clarify operational guidelines and ensure they are accessible to all implementers, 2) Invest in capacity building, especially at the grassroots level, 3) Establish integrated data systems to ensure accuracy and reduce redundancy, 4) Institutionalize inter-agency collaboration with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and 5) Increase community involvement through participatory monitoring and transparency measures.

These recommendations are grounded not only in the theoretical model of Van Meter and Van Horn but also supported by contemporary policy implementation literature, reaffirming the need for adaptive, inclusive, and system-oriented governance mechanisms to address complex social issues like poverty.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

CONCLUSION

This study examined the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in Palembang City using the policy implementation model developed by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975). Based on interviews with key stakeholders, observations, and document analysis, six core variables were analyzed to determine how effectively poverty reduction programs were translated from policy into practice. The findings reveal that while the overarching policy

goals are in alignment with national directives, the operational clarity at the local level remains insufficient. The lack of precise technical guidelines and delayed information flow have hindered frontline implementers. Furthermore, resource limitations, financial, human, and infrastructural are a recurring challenge that reduces the capacity of implementing agencies, particularly at the *kelurahan* and *kecamatan* levels.

Communication and coordination mechanisms among relevant institutions are fragmented, leading to data silos and inefficiencies. While many implementing actors have a positive disposition and commitment, their technical capacity and understanding of policy mechanisms vary widely. Additionally, the external socio-political environment, including political interference and low community awareness, has negatively impacted public trust and program legitimacy.

In conclusion, the poverty alleviation efforts in Palembang City face structural, institutional, and environmental challenges that limit the intended impact of well-designed national policies. These challenges echo the theoretical concerns raised by scholars such as Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980), Hill and Hupe (2002), and others, underscoring that successful implementation is as critical as policy design.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and equity of poverty alleviation programs in Palembang City:

- 1) Improve operational clarity and technical guidelines
 - a) Translate broad policy objectives into clear, measurable, and actionable procedures for field implementers.
 - b) Ensure that technical instructions are delivered in a timely, consistent, and accessible format to all levels.
- 2) Enhance resource allocation and capacity development
 - a) Increase budget allocations and accelerate disbursement processes for poverty programs.
 - b) Conduct regular training and capacity-building workshops, particularly for new staff at the sub-district and village levels.
 - c) Stabilize the human resource structure to reduce the negative impact of frequent rotations and political appointments.
- 3) Integrate data systems and strengthen communication
 - a) Develop an integrated and real-time poverty database that is accessible across departments.
 - b) Encourage horizontal collaboration between agencies through regular joint planning and coordination forums.
 - c) Utilize digital governance tools to support more transparent and efficient policy implementation.
- 4) Strengthen institutional accountability and community engagement
 - a) Institutionalize community-based monitoring systems and complaint-handling mechanisms.
 - b) Promote the involvement of civil society organizations in both planning and evaluation phases to ensure more inclusive governance.
 - c) Increase public awareness campaigns to improve citizens' understanding of eligibility criteria, reducing misconceptions and mistrust.
- 5) Mitigate Political Interference
 - a) Implement anti-corruption safeguards and conduct independent audits during politically sensitive periods (e.g., elections).
 - b) Ensure that beneficiary selection is based strictly on verified data, not political patronage.

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