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Communication Dynamics and Elite Perceptions: Assessing Government Policy Effectiveness in Sumberglagah Leprosy Village, Indonesia

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Abstract

Stigma and discrimination continue to persist in the leprosy village of Sumberglagah, despite government efforts to provide social assistance and community empowerment programs. This article aims to uncover the dynamics of communication and the perceptions of village elites and community members regarding the effectiveness of various government policies targeting Sumberglagah. Utilizing elite theory and a three-dimensional framework—cognitive, affective, and conative—the study employs a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews with five elite village informants, while quantitative data were collected from a survey of 100 respondents in Tanjungkenongo village. Findings indicate that, from the elite perspective, government programs are perceived as relatively ineffective in addressing the needs of the leprosy community, primarily due to a culture of reliance on external assistance from both government and non-government sources. In contrast, quantitative analysis reveals that the community generally expresses satisfaction with government programs, with an average satisfaction score exceeding 4. However, there is notable skepticism regarding the long-term impact of these programs, as reflected in the low community engagement with government-initiated empowerment programs. This study highlights the divergence in perceptions between elites and the community concerning government interventions, emphasizing the need for more effective and culturally attuned strategies to address the unique challenges faced by leprosy-affected communities.

Keywords: Policy; Elite; Village Community; Leprosy

Stigma dan diskriminasi masih terjadi di desa leprosy Sumberglagah, meskipun pemerintah telah berupaya memberikan program bantuan sosial dan pemberdayaan masyarakat. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dinamika komunikasi dan persepsi elit desa serta masyarakat terkait efektivitas berbagai kebijakan pemerintah di Sumberglagah. Dengan menggunakan teori elit dan kerangka tiga dimensi—kognitif, afektif, dan konatif—penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan metode campuran. Data kualitatif diperoleh dari wawancara dengan lima informan elit desa, sementara data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui survei terhadap 100 responden di desa Tanjungkenongo. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dari perspektif elit, program pemerintah cenderung dianggap kurang efektif dalam memenuhi kebutuhan komunitas leprosy, disebabkan oleh budaya ketergantungan pada bantuan dari pihak pemerintah dan non-pemerintah. Sebaliknya, analisis kuantitatif mengungkapkan bahwa masyarakat umumnya merasa puas dengan program pemerintah, dengan rata-rata skor kepuasan melebihi 4. Namun, terdapat skeptisisme mengenai dampak jangka panjang dari program tersebut, tercermin dari rendahnya partisipasi masyarakat dalam program pemberdayaan yang diinisiasi pemerintah. Penelitian ini menyoroti perbedaan persepsi antara elit dan masyarakat tentang intervensi pemerintah, menekankan

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perlunya strategi yang lebih efektif dan sesuai dengan konteks budaya untuk menghadapi tantangan unik yang dihadapi komunitas yang terkena dampak lepra.

Kata Kunci: Kebijakan; Elit; Masyarakat Desa; Kusta

INTRODUCTION.

Discrimination and poverty are the two main challenges faced by former leprosy patients and their descendants. One area known for its leprosy settlements is Sumberglagah, located in Tanjungkenongo Village, Mojokerto District. The majority of former leprosy residents are migrants from various regions within East Java. Initially, they relocated to Sumberglagah due to the establishment of a leprosy hospital in 1952 under the East Java Health Inspection Center. However, over time, Sumberglagah Hospital expanded its services to include general healthcare for non-leprosy patients (Dwi Lina Nur Wiyastuti, Indra Prasetyo, 2021; Ramadhona et al., 2018)

In addition to wanting proximity to a leprosy health facility, they relocated from their home areas to settle in groups in Sumberglagah due to the stigma that leprosy is dirty and highly contagious. This stigma has led to the social exclusion of leprosy sufferers, resulting in various social and economic challenges (Aulya, 2016). Socially, many Sumberglagah residents lack confidence in finding partners outside the leprosy village community. Economically, many residents struggle to secure employment due to the stigma associated with a Sumberglagah address and face difficulties in starting businesses, particularly in the culinary sector, making it challenging to meet their daily needs.

The issues of poverty and powerlessness, particularly among physically disabled former leprosy patients, have made begging a prevalent occupation in Sumberglagah. This has led to a public perception of Sumberglagah not only as a leprosy village but also as a "begging village." As of 2021, there were a total of 400 former leprosy patients and their family members residing in the area. They are distributed across 189 family units that occupy land owned by the East Java Provincial Social Service.(Anggoro, I. Y., & Husein, 2022; Jainudin, J., & Astuti, 2022)

The issues of poverty and negative stigma within the Sumberglagah community can generally be categorized into external and internal factors (Cica Nopika Sari, Meyzi Heriyanto, 2018). Externally, the problem stems from the weak support or lack of responsiveness from institutional entities at the village and supra-village levels, such as inadequate resources and infrastructure, which drive residents to seek shortcuts for livelihood, like resorting to begging. Internally, the challenges arise from individual barriers or the mentality of dependency, as residents have become accustomed to being recipients of social aid. Internal factors include low motivation and work ethic, limited access to business capital, and a lack of skills in management and technology (Dinansyah et al., 2024; Zulaikha et al., 2024).

The problem of stigma in leprosy villages also exists in India Ghana, and Nepal. Cases in India are in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The Uttar Pradesh government created a program and committee to reduce the stigma of leprosy through an assessment in the form of a survey of the local community (Raju et al., 2021). In the case of Tamil Nadu, leprosy patients lose their economic productivity, affecting social relationships in the family,

school, workplace and other public places. Indicates the need for prevention or correction of deformities, as it appears to be the degree of physical attractiveness which influences interpersonal behavior (Kopparty, 1998). The case in Ho village Ghana, experiences discrimination by persons cured of leprosy (PCLs). Reintegration of PCLs through community education is necessary to eliminate stigma and discrimination of leprosy sufferers. Religious leaders, chiefs and queen mothers, community elders, and other key persons within communities must be the focal point of initial education (Sottie & Darkey, 2018). While the case in Nepal discrimination has a psychological impact on leprosy sufferers (Jay et al., 2021).

Back to the discussion of Indonesian leprosy villages, there are five other hamlets located in Tanjungkenongo village, Pacet Sub-district, Mojokerto Regency, namely Glinsem, Balongkenongo, Tanjungsari, Sumberjejer, and Tanjunganom. Based on the population data of Tanjungkenongo village, Sumberglagah hamlet has the largest population of 712 people (divided into 240 households) compared to the other five hamlets. Since 1970, many migrants from various parts of East Java Province have moved to the Sumberglagah leprosy shelter.

Table 1. Population of Tanjungkenongo

Sub-village	Family Card	Population
Glinsem	26	76
Balongkenongo	150	465
Tanjungsari	174	545
Source	72	221
Tanjunganom	116	356
Source Glagah	240	712

Source: Tanjungkenongo Village, 2023

Sumberglagah leprosy village is a special area under the auspices of the East Java Provincial Social Service, so the land for housing and agricultural fields is authorized by the government. Departing from the condition of the ex-leprosy residents of Sumberglagah, the government through the social service makes various policies in the form of social empowerment programs and social assistance programs (Arianti, 2020; Hamzah, 2020; Jainudin, J., & Astuti, 2022). More specifically, the social assistance program consists of various kinds of goods, for example the Minister of Social Affairs has distributed various packages of basic food needs or basic foodstuffs. Furthermore, the Mojokerto Regent has also provided wheelchair assistance for ex-leprosy sufferers. Other assistance comes directly from Sumberglagah Hospital in the form of providing prosthetic limbs for residents of Sumberglagah who are physically disabled. (Hidayat, Endik, Baihaqi, Aufa Izzuddin, & Anisyukurlillah, 2023)

The research focuses more on government policies in the form of empowerment programs for Sumberglagah residents as an effort to improve economic welfare. Some of the programs consist of capital assistance for shop businesses for residents who are already

permanently disabled. Meanwhile, residents who are still healthy are given working capital in the form of goats, native chickens, and the construction of fish ponds for farming. There are also training programs initiated by the government and non-governmental organizations including sewing work skills, entrepreneurship, and health issues about maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Annisarizki & Suahya, 2018; Suryandari & Holifah, 2022).

In the Sumberglagah study, Duncan's effectiveness theory in Steers was used to measure the program implemented by the government in the form of empowerment for ex-leprosy residents of Sumberglagah. The three main aspects used as indicators of effectiveness are goal achievement, integration, and adaptation. (Sari et al., 2018; Yusni Farida, Muhlis Madani, 2022) First, goal achievement refers to the duration of the time target that becomes the deadline, the target in the form of concrete targets, and legal institutional procedures as a foothold. Second, integration can be analyzed from the procedures and stages of socialization. Third, adaptation is divided into two factors, namely the acceleration of capabilities and resources in the form of infrastructure (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Kojansow et al., 2023; Servaes, 2022; Viererbl & Koch, 2022).

Another unit of analysis is the theory of perception, from three focuses, namely cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. (Anggoro, I. Y., & Husein, 2022; Miysell & Wasisto, 2020; Olivia Winda Ony Panjaitan, Ani Mahrita, 2020) First, the cognitive dimension is related to a person's mindset when obtaining knowledge. In the context of Sumberglagah, residents' knowledge about various empowerment programs for ex-leprosy residents. Second, the affective dimension is based on the community's emotional condition and feelings towards an object. For example, various government social assistance and empowerment programs to improve the welfare conditions of Sumberglagah residents. Third, the conative dimension relates to the motives for individual actions and deeds according to their perceptions of certain objects. The explanation is the concern for government policies to improve the welfare of Sumberglagah residents.

Another additional theory from Edward explains that communication is an important factor in policy implementation (Zulaikha et al., 2024). Because in the Sumberglagah case, policies are effective if village public officials know what policies they will work on. The stages of socialization and knowledge go well in the form of a synergistic communication process between the central, regional and village bureaucratic levels of government (Hidayat, 2021; Susilo et al., 2021). By looking at the exposure of social problems and theoretical instruments that become the unit of analysis, it is very important to look at perceptions of government policies other than just the political actors of the village elite. The assumption is that this research wants to prove whether the perceptions of the village elite and the community about the various policies of the Sumberglagah ex-leprosy community empowerment program are the same or perhaps different.

RESEARCH METHOD.

Through this argument, the researcher used a mixed research method based on qualitative data and quantitative data (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2017; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Greene et al., 1989; Tsai et al., 2023). The qualitative data came from interviews with informants from the village elite. Determination of informants using

purposive sampling technique. The assumption that informants fit the criteria is that elite informants are considered to have the information needed for this research. Meanwhile, Interviews were conducted directly with informants (Neuman, 2014; Pasaribu et al., 2024). Then, the quantitative data came from one hundred questionnaires distributed in five hamlets other than Sumberglagah. The five hamlets are Glinsem, Balongkenongo, Sumberjejer, Tanjunganom, and tanjungsari. The survey was carried out directly by Tanjungkenongo villagers with research assistants. Data analysis was conducted comprehensively from qualitative data from interviews and quantitative-based data analysis from survey results. For the qualitative data analysis process using Nvivo software and quantitative survey data processing using Microsoft Excel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION.

Implementation of Social Assistance Policy and Community Empowerment in Sumberglagah Leprosy Village

When Sumberglagah first became a target for the implementation of various government programs, since 1982 patients who had recovered from leprosy did not want to return to their respective areas of origin. They preferred to live in the location east of Sumberglagah Leprosy Hospital. The reasons for this were rejection and discrimination in their home areas and the value of the facilities in Sumberglagah. Government assets that can be utilized by ex-leprosy residents include land that can be used for housing and agricultural land that can generate profits. Total government land assets recorded in Sumberglagah are 51,050 m² (lingkarsosial.org).

Some of the government programs that have been implemented in Sumberglagah come from the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the Mojokerto District Government, and the Tanjungkenongo Village Government. One of the central-level officials who has come directly to Sumberglagah is the Minister of Social Affairs Tri Rismaharini. She distributed assistance for the social rehabilitation assistance program or ATENSI for short. The assistance is in the form of child nutrition supplements, milk, honey, vitamins, and cereal biscuits. The form of social assistance program is also the distribution of basic needs assistance or abbreviated as SEMBAKO which consists of rice, instant noodles, and cooking oil (mojokerto.suaraindonesia.co.id).

The Minister of Social Affairs also created an empowerment program for Sumberglagah residents within the scope of the business of workshop and carpentry skills. Meanwhile, the culinary business is not the target of the training program because the stigma of the leprosy village is not suitable for the food business. The empowerment program is also in the form of capital assistance for shops and livestock businesses for Sumberglagah residents. But the Minister of Social Affairs gave directions for leprosy sufferers who have fully recovered should leave the Sumberglagah area so that they are more independent and not only depend on government assistance (wartakota.tribunnews.com).

At the regional level, there is a Beneficiary Family program abbreviated as KPM by the Mojokerto Regency Social Service. Regent Ikfina Fahmawati symbolically handed over basic food packages to representatives of former leprosy residents of Sumberglagah. The total number of beneficiaries is 18 family heads whose domicile is in Sumberglagah. On

that occasion, the Mojokerto Regent also handed over wheelchairs to five leprosy patients. Local officials who attended the handover were the Head of the Mojokerto Regency Social Service, the Pacet Sub-District Head, and the Village Head (diskominfo.mojokertokab.go.id).

The empowerment program for Sumberglagah leprosy village also comes from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. Actors who participate directly in the program are university lecturers and students. Students are directly involved through the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka or MBKM scheme. Some activities such as teaching campuses and real work lectures that create social projects for Sumberglagah residents.

Meanwhile, lecturers carry out empowerment programs funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The activity is the training of leprosy alert cadres with a total of 19 participants from Sumberglagah residents. The interesting thing about this training is the form of making high protein food and making herbal drinks to increase endurance. Even though the issue of food is still very sensitive, the stigma of leprosy is transmitted through food so that it does not have a high selling value if it is produced in the Sumberglagah area to be sold in other areas. The Leprosy Alert Post is located in one of the Sumberglagah residents' houses. The donated goods include a refrigerator, blander, table, and chairs. Some foods that can be made in the post are catfish nuggets, mushrooms, and fish balls (lppm.unusa.ac.id).

The implementation of the Sumberglagah empowerment policy can be successful, if the communication process of policy socialization runs appropriately, accurately, and is conveyed to all villagers (Bandrovskiy, 2020; Briandana et al., 2020; de Vries, 2020; Nhon et al., 2018; Susilo & Dizon, 2023). There are three components to assess the success of the communication process, namely the transmission of communication channels, the clarity of knowledge understood by policy actors, and the consistency of supra-village government communication to policy implementers in the village (Hidayat, 2021; Susilo et al., 2021). The government-funded program in Sumberglagah leprosy ward is a form of public policy. As stated by Edwards and Sharkansy in (Alim, 2109) argue that the manifestations of public policy are laws and regulations made by the government, speeches by political actors, government programs, and various actions taken by public officials. Based on this policy conception, political actors act to solve various problems that exist in the Sumberglagah community. Government policies focus on two categories, namely social assistance programs and community empowerment programs in Sumberglagah.

When compared to other countries' research, the policy pattern of empowering Sumberglagah has similarities and differences. In the case of lepers in Nepal, the government is more focused on implementing policies on health aspects, namely physical health and mental health (Jay et al., 2021). The policy focus is different from the Sumberglagah case, which is more on the economic aspect and there has never been a psychologist house program. Another case in Ghana, there are similarities in the implementation model of government programs on leprosy education (Sottie & Darkey, 2018). The similarity between the case of Ho village in Ghana and Sumberglagah village in Indonesia is that both regions use elite groups as socializers about leprosy. Elites consist of government and non-government parties who have influence in rural communities.

Village Elites' Perceptions of Government Policy Effectiveness in Sumberglagah

The designed products underwent testing by experts in economics and design. The first testing was conducted by Virgiana Nugransih Siwi SE., M.Sc., a lecturer in Development Economics at UKSW. In this testing phase, the expert reviewed and provided input regarding the Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) and the selling price. The selling price aligns with consumer affordability, competitor pricing, quality, and the uniqueness of the product. Suggestions were provided, stating that for future new products, new calculations need to be conducted based on the type of product and the latest market conditions. This is because the selling price of products from the same company could elicit differing responses from the public.

This section briefly discusses the village elite. In the social strata, there are groupings of elite categories, namely the national level and the regional level. This research focuses on local elites based on the perceptions of village elites about various government programs in Sumberglagah. The position of the village elite as a conduit for various interests in society is significant enough to assess public policy. They have the capacity and resources to understand the aspirations of the village community.

At the village level, the groups that are considered to have significant status and roles in society are formal elites and informal elites. According to Koentjaraningrat in (Hidayat, E., Susilo, D., & Garcia, 2021; Lumendek, 2018) The formal elite is the village elite whose position is within the village government, while the informal elite is outside the village government. The categories of formal elite and informal elite actors are defined based on the foundation of power that each elite group has. The foundation of the formal elite is official regulations that are manifested in the authority of public positions. Meanwhile, the informal elite is more grounded in the power that comes from the recognition and trust of the village community.

The individual perceptions in this study are the Tanjungkenongo village elite, which are divided into informants from the village government and informants from the non-village government. The village head explained that all assistance to the ex-leprosy residents of Sumberglagah was directly channeled to the residents without going through the village. He only recorded Sumberglagah residents who would receive empowerment programs in the form of livestock in the form of goats, ducks, and chickens. Meanwhile, residents who experience physical disability limitations will be made a shop. These programs arose because the ex-leprosy residents of Sumberglagah had difficulty finding work outside the village.

Because it is difficult for people in Sumberglagah to find work, begging has become the dominant profession in Sumberglagah. The more severe the level of disability caused by leprosy, the greater the profit from the begging profession. This is why Sumberglagah is not only known as a leprosy village but also as a begging village. The informant of the Sumberglagah hamlet head explained the phenomenon of rampant begging. Even the minister of social affairs has warned that ex-leprosy residents should no longer roam as beggars on city streets. So there are many government programs but the mindset of residents who are pragmatic in finding money.

The informant of the hamlet head continued his explanation by explaining that it is precisely with leprosy that people dare to take to the streets to become beggars. Because

no one dares to catch people with leprosy, the reason is fear of infection. He also added that the reason for the stubbornness of leprosy residents is because they were ostracized from their place of origin, so they gathered together as lepers in Sumberglagah. Sumberglagah residents tend to be less responsive to government training programs. They prefer assistance programs but training programs are not effective.

When confirmed with the above statement by the dusun head, the village head did explain that Sumberglagah residents are used to receiving assistance because they are lepers. All of this assistance is not in the form of cash, but rather in the form of goods and job training. Especially the training program is still ineffective, because ex-lepers of Sumberglagah are accustomed to light work and make a lot of profit as beggars.

Meanwhile, informal elite informants explained that it is indeed more lucrative to undergo the dominant begging profession in Sumberglagah. The division of labor is for healthy Sumberglagah residents to act as ojek or motorcycle drivers. Meanwhile, ex-leprosy residents with disabilities act as beggars who seek sympathy and donations from the general public. Profits will be halved from this donation-seeking activity. So they both only work a few hours but get maximum results every day compared to being factory laborers.

According to the informant, this activity caused the government's empowerment program to fail and the training did not continue in the Sumberglagah area. Thus, the cause of the lack of interest in training programs is that the character of Sumberglagah ex-leprosy residents is difficult to change so that they are not independent and rely on assistance from others. Even though the empowerment policy program is actually quite good from the central and regional levels. There are also donors who initiate training from the government but the response remains the same, namely that Sumberglagah residents are less interested.

Some elite community informants explained the failure of the government empowerment program due to mental factors and interpersonal relationships. In social interaction, self and others are the most important components. Self-understanding of people with leprosy determines the success of communication, known as self-conception (Ramdhani et al., 2024). Self-concept is formed through each individual's personal experience, relationships with others, and interactions from external parties. People with leprosy have a self-concept that has been developed since living in Sumberglagah leprosy village that their people tend to be marginalized and disgusting. There are even lepers who feel proud of their disease because people are afraid of them. The phenomenon of Sumberglagah residents' behavior shows that the formation of self-concept through interpersonal communication is the way a person sees himself through interactions with others (Kuen & ., 2019; Yasundari et al., 2024).

Community Perceptions of Government Policy Effectiveness in Sumberglagah

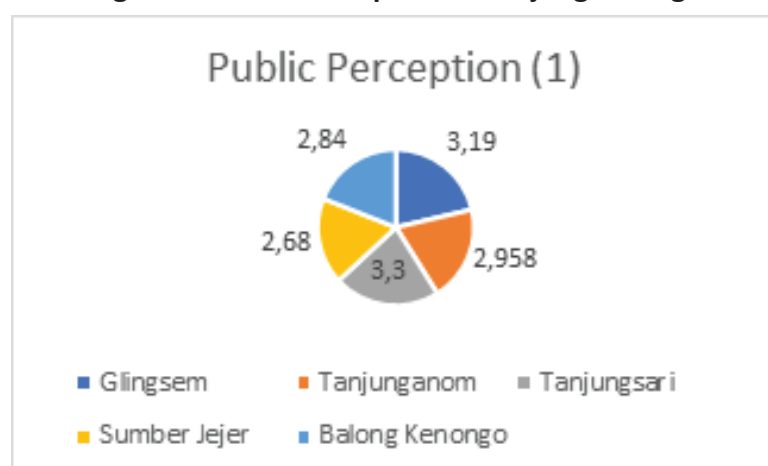
The discussion in this section is the result of research related to the perception of residents outside the Sumberglagah hamlet towards government policies. The five hamlets are Glinsem, Tanjunganom, Tanjungsari, Sumberjejer, and Balongkenongo. All hamlets are included in the Tanjungkenongo village area. From the Tanjungkenongo village population of 2,375 residents, the research sample will be taken from each hamlet except the

Sumberglagah hamlet. According to Supardi in (Anggoro, I. Y., & Husein, 2022). The sample is part of the population that is used as a research subject and a form of representation of the population of Tanjungkenongo village. To determine the sample, the slovin formula was used with a margin of error of 10% or 0.1.

From this formula, a sample of 100 people was obtained, with details of each of the five hamlets totaling 20 samples. Meanwhile, the three indicators of community perception that became the basis for the preparation of the questionnaire were cognitive aspects, affective aspects, and conative aspects. Perception when assessing objects can appear positive or negative views. Robbin's opinion in (Miysell & Wasisto, 2020) a positive view is the point of view of a person's assessment of an object or information in the form of a positive impression, so that the perceived object has met expectations. Conversely, negative perception is a person's assessment of reality or information with the result of a negative view and contrary to initial expectations.

Through the results of a questionnaire with three indicators. First, cognitive about the knowledge of Tanjungkenongo villagers about the impact of various government policies and understanding of the changes that have occurred in Sumberglagah leprosy village. Second, affective about the feeling condition of Tanjungkenongo villagers about the belief that government assistance can change the situation of ex-leprosy residents for the better. Third, conative is a form of awareness in changing the image of the leprosy village which has always been the object of government aid policies. Data on the perceptions of Tanjungkenongo villagers towards various government policies in Sumberglagah consisting of 6 questionnaire items and answered by 100 respondents. Further details of the average score of each hamlet are Glingsem 3.19, Sumberjejer 2.68, Tanjungsari 3.3, Tanjunganom 2.958, and finally Balongkenongo with an average of 2.84. An interesting analysis through a comparison of the five hamlets found that Sumberjejer hamlet had the lowest score of 2.68 on the impact of various government policies on ex-lepers in Sumberglagah.

Figure 1. Public Perception of Tanjungkenongo

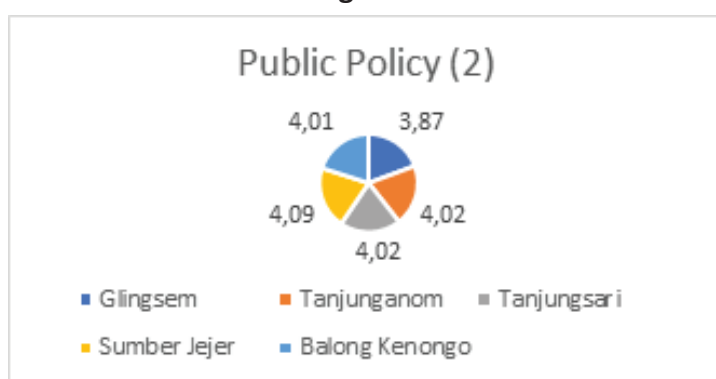


Looking at the table above, positive perceptions are more based on individual satisfaction, knowledge and experience that give a good image. Conversely, negative perceptions are more likely to lead to individual dissatisfaction, lack of knowledge

and unpleasant experiences about an object. There are two hamlets that have a very positive perception of an optimistic attitude about the impact of government policies on Sumberglagah residents. The two hamlets have an average score above 3, namely Glingsem 3.19 and Tanjungsari 3.3. The other three hamlets tend to be neutral about the perception of Sumberglagah residents.

The next data on the measurement of government programs is seen from three indicators, namely goal achievement, integration and adaptation. The first indicator of goal achievement is assessed from program introduction, program planning, and program implementation. The second indicator of integration is more about synergy with related parties or stakeholders. Indicators of program adaptability.

Figure 2.



Government Public Policy Tanjungkenongo

Descriptive data analysis shows that from a total of 100 respondents with eight questions, the majority are satisfied with government programs, especially those that concentrate more in the Sumberglagah hamlet area. Because four hamlets have an average score above 4, namely Tanjungsari, Balongkenongo, Tanjunganom, and Sumberjejer. Meanwhile, the average score is below 4 or the lowest, namely Glingsem hamlet with a score of 3.87. Thus, government programs are considered effective and satisfactory in Tanjungkenongo village.

Analyze data on perceptions and effectiveness of government policies shows that all respondents were satisfied with various government policies. Although, the majority of programs only target the leprosy village of Semberglagah as the object of policy. In contrast to the response to policies, the majority of respondents tended to have a fairly pessimistic perception of changes in the leprosy village despite government assistance, especially from the three hamlets (Balongkenongo, Tanjunganom, Sumberjejer). The results of the survey of 100 Tanjungkenongo villagers show the same alignment with the views of village elites regarding perceptions of the leprosy village community empowerment policy. Villagers tend to be happy with various social assistance program policies in the name of community empowerment. However, what about the effectiveness of these policies, the elite and the community agree that the empowerment policies designed by the government are less effective (Budiyanti et al., 2020; Pribadi, 2015). Based on the research findings, government

policies do not pay attention to the aspirations of residents, so they often fail to change the condition of leprosy sufferers.

This research offers an in-depth examination of stakeholder perceptions on government initiatives. The results suggest that, according to village elites, government initiatives are perceived as mostly ineffectual due to a pervasive culture of reliance among people on external aid, whether from governmental or non-governmental sources (Zulaikha et al., 2024). This cultural reliance, along with stigma, has sustained a cycle of dependency that contradicts the goals of independence and empowerment of these initiatives. In contrast, quantitative feedback from the community indicates a more favorable evaluation of government initiatives, with an average satisfaction rating above 4 out of 5. Nonetheless, much uncertainty persists over the long-term effects of these activities. This contradiction in perception is essential as it underscores the divergence between elite aspirations and grassroots reality. The discrepancies might be ascribed to the distinct criteria employed by each group to evaluate policy efficacy. For elites, effectiveness is intricately linked to measurable enhancements in self-sufficiency and less reliance, whereas the community perceives effectiveness in terms of immediate advantages and assistance received (Susi Nurdinaningsih et al., 2024; Zulaikha et al., 2024).

A further analysis indicates that the study could not identify coherent groups within networks, signifying a minimal degree of connection and collaboration among participants, which further constrains the efficacy of empowerment initiatives. The absence of robust internal connections hinders the sustainable development of social capital, complicating the establishment of a unified community response to policies (Freire & Stren, 2001; Miyamoto, 2020). The existence of vulnerabilities, or pivotal agents linking disparate elements, signifies a tenuous network where the lack of significant influences may impede communication and information exchange. This vulnerability highlights the necessity for enhanced communication tactics that include more stakeholders and promote robust linkages within the network. The findings theoretically correspond with Duncan's theory of effectiveness, which posits that policy success hinges on goal attainment, integration, and adaptability. The research indicates that although government initiatives may fulfill immediate goals, they are inadequately aligned with community need and more profound cultural settings. The disparity between elite and community perceptions further substantiates Edward III's policy implementation theory, which emphasizes the need of communication and alignment of stakeholder expectations for effective policy execution.

The findings recommends that governments take a bottom-up strategy that emphasizes community involvement and integrates local expertise into the design and execution of initiatives (Rafa'al, 2017; Yasir et al., 2019). This strategy would facilitate the reconciliation of perceptions between the elite and the wider community, guaranteeing that empowerment initiatives are both positively embraced and result in significant, enduring transformation. Furthermore, considering the pervasive stigma and reliance on assistance, forthcoming initiatives have to incorporate elements of psychological and social support to tackle the fundamental cultural and societal obstacles to empowerment. The study's results align with global studies on populations impacted by leprosy, including instances in India, Ghana, and Nepal, where stigma and economic disadvantage persist. In contrast to Nepal, which prioritizes mental health and reintegration in its programs, Indonesia's strategy in

Sumberglagah concentrates on economic empowerment while insufficiently addressing psychological well-being. In Ghana, the emphasis is on community education via elite groups, which is likewise advised for Sumberglagah to alter mindsets and cultivate a culture of self-reliance. This research highlights the necessity for more sophisticated and culturally attuned techniques to tackle the intricate issues encountered by communities impacted by leprosy. To improve policy efficacy, government initiatives must transcend mere material aid and concentrate on establishing durable support frameworks that incorporate psychological empowerment and active community engagement (Alfikri, 2023; Azhari et al., 2023; Husain et al., 2023; Kojansow et al., 2023). This method would aid in dismantling enduring stigma and cultivating more resilient and self-sufficient communities in Sumberglagah.

CONCLUSION.

From the discussion of the responses of the village elite and the people of Tanjungkenongo village to various government programs that have been allocated in Sumberglagah. The research findings conclude that village elites tend to be pessimistic about the effectiveness of various government programs, which have an impact on changes for the better on the people of Sumberglagah. The reason is that cultural factors due to the exclusion of lepers have shaped their character, which tends to be stubborn and pragmatic. In addition, the stigma of leprosy is often used to seek help from other parties in the form of donations and goods. This has stigmatized Sumberglagah as not only a leprosy village, but also as a begging village.

The next finding from the community's perception shows that villagers tend to appreciate and give a positive or satisfied impression of various government programs, especially in the Sumberglagah area. However, whether these programs have a direct impact on the people of Sumberglagah, the community response tends to be less certain or not so optimistic. This response is particularly evident in the three hamlets that have an average score below 3, with an average score of 2.958 in Tanjunganom hamlet, an average score of 2.84 in Glinsem hamlet, and the lowest score of 2.68 in Sumberjejer hamlet.

This research uses three theories, namely Duncan's effectiveness theory, Edward III's policy implementation theory, and perception theory. Some findings are in the form of theory confirmation and theory elaboration. The communication resource factor is an important factor in the Sumberglagah empowerment policy in accordance with the policy implementation theory. Another implication of the theory is that there are differences in perceptions of policy effectiveness between the village elite and the village community. This research recommends a bottom-up policy model. The government should pay attention to the aspirations of the community and not only focus on material assistance. The next leprosy village empowerment program can focus more on the mental and spiritual aspects so as to produce a sustainable long-term impact.

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