

OPTIMIZING THE ROLE OF REGIONAL LIBRARIES THROUGH THE KUNINGAN BERCAHAYA PROGRAM IN IMPROVING LITERACY AMONG THE COMMUNITY IN KUNINGAN REGENCY

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Abstract

Libraries are public facilities that serve to maintain literacy among the general public. In Kuningan Regency itself, there is a special program to improve community literacy called Kuningan Bercahaya, which stands for Kuningan Learning and Reading Throughout Life. This study aims to analyze how the program is implemented and how the Regional Library plays a role as the authority in improving community literacy in Kuningan Regency. The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. The research results were analyzed using the policy implementation theory dimensions, which include program implementation, community involvement, and implementation performance. To analyze the role, the facilitative role from the role theory of Jim Ife and Frank Tesoriero was used. The results showed that the program implementation was not yet optimal due to the absence of standard guidelines, limited resources, and weak coordination between agencies. However, the Regional Library has carried out most of its facilitative role, especially in the aspects of social animation, mediation, and support provision. Supporting factors came from community support and local government commitment, while inhibiting factors included a lack of budget, limited access to digital literacy, and unclear policy content.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Regional Libraries, Community Empowerment

Abstrak

Perpustakaan merupakan fasilitas umum yang berfungsi untuk menjaga literasi masyarakat umum. Di Kabupaten Kuningan sendiri, terdapat program khusus untuk meningkatkan literasi masyarakat bernama Kuningan Bercahaya yang merupakan singkatan dari Kuningan Belajar dan Membaca Sepanjang Hayat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana implementasi program tersebut dan bagaimana peran Perpustakaan Daerah sebagai pihak yang berwenang dalam meningkatkan literasi masyarakat di Kabupaten Kuningan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian dianalisis menggunakan dimensi teori implementasi kebijakan yang meliputi pelaksanaan program, keterlibatan masyarakat, dan kinerja implementasi. Untuk menganalisis peran menggunakan peran fasilitatif dari teori peran dari Jim Ife dan Frank Tesoriero. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi program belum optimal karena belum adanya pedoman yang baku, keterbatasan sumber daya, dan lemahnya koordinasi antarinstansi. Namun, Perpustakaan Daerah telah menjalankan sebagian besar peran fasilitatif, terutama dalam aspek animasi sosial, mediasi, dan pemberian dukungan. Faktor pendukung berasal dari dukungan masyarakat dan komitmen pemerintah daerah, sedangkan faktor penghambat meliputi minimnya anggaran, akses literasi digital yang terbatas, serta isi kebijakan yang belum memiliki kejelasan substansi.

Kata kunci: Implementasi Kebijakan, Perpustakaan Daerah, Pemberdayaan Masyarakat



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for developing quality human resources. The United Nations, through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established a fourth goal, namely quality education, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive and quality education for all without discrimination. One fundamental aspect of quality education is literacy. Literacy encompasses not only the ability to read and write, but also the ability to understand, interpret, and use information critically for everyday life.¹ Thus, literacy is a primary prerequisite for society to actively participate in social, economic, and political development.

Despite this, Indonesia's literacy rate remains relatively low. According to the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, Indonesia ranked 70th out of 81 countries in reading literacy.² This situation indicates that the majority of Indonesians still face difficulties in accessing, understanding, and processing information effectively. Literacy is a crucial indicator for improving human resource quality and national competitiveness.³

One of the government's efforts to improve public literacy is through strengthening the function of libraries. Law Number 43 of 2007 concerning Libraries emphasizes that libraries serve as a vehicle for lifelong learning that plays a role in developing the potential of the community to become knowledgeable, intelligent, and competitive individuals.⁴ In the context of public administration, regional libraries have a strategic function as public service institutions that play a role in community empowerment through access to information and non-formal learning. However, developments in information technology require libraries to adapt to avoid losing relevance in the digital age.

Kuningan Regency in West Java has a special program that focuses on improving public literacy in Kuningan Regency called "Kuningan BERCAHAYA" which is an abbreviation of Kuningan Learning and Reading Throughout Life. This was launched by the Kuningan Regency Archives and Library Service based on the Decree of the Regent of Kuningan No. 41 of 2017 concerning the Launching of the "Kuningan Bercahaya" Movement (Kuningan Learning and Reading Throughout Life) within the Kuningan Regency Government which is legally based on the Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs and Regional Autonomy Number 3 of 2001 concerning Village/Sub-district Libraries and Kuningan Regency Regional Regulation Number 11 of 2009 concerning the Implementation of Education to realize Kuningan Regency as a Literacy Regency

¹ OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 Results: Learning During and Beyond COVID-19*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

² OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 Results: Learning During and Beyond COVID-19*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

³ Kebudayaan, K. P. (2020). *Peta Jalan Literasi Nasional*. Jakarta: Kemendikbud.

⁴ Undang-Undang Nomor 43 Tahun 2007 tentang Perpustakaan. Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia.

where this program emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and encourages people in Kuningan Regency to continue learning and reading without any age restrictions. Some of the activities carried out by Disarsipus in implementing this program include the Street Book Display Activity which aims to reach the community directly and raise public awareness of the importance of reading books, in addition there is also the Literacy Harvest activity where this activity is a form of appreciation for individuals or groups who contribute to the literacy movement in Kuningan Regency. The Kuningan Regency Archives and Library Service is committed to increasing the level of literacy in Kuningan Regency.

There are various ways to measure a community's literacy level, one of which is the Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM), a measurement conducted by provincial and district/city governments to foster and develop libraries as lifelong learning platforms. Kuningan Regency only scored 53.96, quite low compared to West Java Province's score of 60.02.⁵ In addition to the low literacy index, visits to regional libraries have also continued to decline over the past three years. One of the causes is the lack of clear technical and implementation guidelines for the program, limited human resources and budget, and weak inter-agency coordination. On the other hand, local government support and community participation are crucial assets that can strengthen the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program going forward.

Although the Kuningan Bercahaya program was launched in 2017, until 2023, in order to implement the Kuningan Bercahaya program, Disarsipus only had a decree as its legal basis, and did not have implementation instructions or technical instructions in running the program. So the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program depended on the initiative and innovation of the implementers. The absence of operational guidelines and technical instructions also made the monitoring and evaluation process of the Kuningan Bercahaya program difficult because there were no definite standards. The low level of public literacy in Kuningan Regency indicates that the Archives and Library Service of Kuningan Regency, especially the regional library, had not implemented the previously designed program optimally and the Archives and Library Service of Kuningan Regency had not carried out its role optimally.

This research is based on the need to examine how the Kuningan Bercahaya program is implemented and the role of the Kuningan Regency Regional Library in optimizing community literacy improvement. The analysis is conducted using policy implementation theory, which emphasizes the dimensions of program implementation, community involvement, and implementation performance in influencing implementation success. Furthermore, this research also utilizes the facilitative role theory of Jim Ife and Frank Tesoriero, which views the role of

⁵ Nasional, P. (2023). *Indeks Pembangunan Literasi Masyarakat*. Retrieved from Perpustakaan Nasional: <https://satudata.perpusnas.go.id/dataset/indeks-pembangunan-literasi-masyarakat-iplm-2023>

public institutions as facilitators in community empowerment through social animation, mediation, support, and consensus building. By combining these two approaches, this research is expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of community-based literacy policies and strengthen the institutional capacity of regional libraries as agents of social transformation in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation process of the Kuningan Bercahaya Program policy and the dynamics of the role of the Kuningan Regency Regional Library in improving public literacy. According to Strauss & Corbin, qualitative research methods are a type of research that produces descriptive data about the phenomena being studied. This data is analyzed inductively to produce findings and conclusions.⁶

Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with various informants directly involved in program implementation, such as officials from the Archives and Library Service (Disarpus), village library managers, literacy community volunteers, and beneficiary communities. Observations were conducted by directly observing literacy activities in the field, including Street Book Displays, Literacy Harvests, and Community Reading Garden (TBM) activities. Meanwhile, documentation was conducted by reviewing various supporting documents such as activity reports, library visit data, and policy documents related to the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program.

The data collection techniques used in this study were interviews, observation, and documentation. The qualitative data analysis used in this study was based on a model created by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, which consists of three activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing verification.⁷ In the data condensation stage, researchers selected, simplified, and organized interview and observation data to focus on the research theme. Furthermore, in the data presentation stage, categorized information was presented in narrative form and an analysis matrix to facilitate understanding of the findings. Finally, in the conclusion-drawing and verification stage, researchers interpreted the analysis results by linking them to public policy implementation theory and the facilitative role theory of Ife & Tesoriero.

⁶ Staruss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basic of Qualitative Reaseach: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. USA: Sage Publications.

⁷ Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis, A Methods Sourcebook, Edition 3*. USA: Sage Publications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Shining Brass Program

The research results indicate that the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program in Kuningan Regency has not been optimal, primarily due to the lack of technical guidelines (juknis) and implementation guidelines (juklak) as the operational basis for the program. Consequently, the program's implementation process relies on the initiative and improvisation of implementers in the field, both at the Archives and Library Service (Disarpus) and at the village level. This situation has resulted in uneven program implementation. Some areas demonstrate quite dynamic literacy activities due to active community and village apparatus support, while other areas are passive due to a lack of systematic guidance and direction.

This finding aligns with Van Meter and Van Horn's perspective, which asserts that clarity of policy standards and objectives is a key factor in determining the success of public policy implementation. Policy standards serve as guidelines that provide direction and boundaries for implementers in interpreting policies into concrete actions. If these standards are not clearly formulated, implementers at the technical level tend to use subjective judgment and personal interpretation in carrying out activities. This results in variations in implementation, both in terms of the form of activities, intensity, and results achieved in each region.

In the Kuningan Bercahaya Program, the lack of technical guidelines (juknis) and implementation guidelines (juklak) resulted in a lack of a unified direction in the implementation process. Field implementers, including regional librarians, village library managers, and community volunteers, conducted literacy activities based on their own creativity and experience, without standardized operational guidelines. For example, there were differences in the implementation of Street Book Displays, reading corner promotions, and digital literacy training in each sub-district.

This situation indicates that Kuningan Bercahaya does not yet have a control system and measurable performance indicators as a basis for policy evaluation. The absence of clear parameters makes it difficult to compare program achievements across regions, preventing the Public Order Agency (Disarpus) from objectively assessing implementation effectiveness. However, according to Grindle, successful policy implementation depends heavily on clarity of policy objectives, availability of information, and the ability of implementing agencies to translate objectives into measurable operational indicators. In this regard, implementers at the technical level work in an interpretive, rather than normative, direction because there are no standard guidelines governing the form, frequency, or targets of literacy activities to be achieved.

The absence of these guidelines also makes program evaluation difficult, as there are no benchmarks for success. Current activity evaluations have been largely administrative in nature, such as measuring the number of activities conducted or the number of participants, without in-

depth assessments of changes in community reading behavior or the impact on literacy. Consequently, the evaluation process cannot provide accurate feedback for policy improvements in subsequent periods. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation theory, which states that unclear policy standards and targets will lead to inconsistencies in implementation, weak coordination between actors, and low accountability for program outcomes.

Furthermore, resource constraints are also a significant obstacle to the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program. Interviews with the Kuningan Regency Archives and Library Service (Disarpus) revealed that budget constraints are a major factor hindering the sustainability of literacy activities in various target areas. The available budget is largely absorbed by routine operational activities, leaving limited fiscal space to support community literacy programs. This situation directly impacts the implementation of activities such as fostering community reading parks (TBM), providing new reading materials, and implementing community-based literacy activities that require logistical and transportation support.

Limited funding also results in weak monitoring and evaluation of program implementation at the sub-district and village levels. The Public Service Agency (Disarpus) has not been able to conduct regular field visits to monitor the progress of literacy activities, as operational costs are insufficient to cover all of the areas covered by the program across Kuningan Regency. As a result, some areas geographically farther from the city center are less monitored and do not receive the same level of support as areas closer to the district capital. This has led to disparities in program implementation, with areas with strong community support experiencing rapid growth, while those lacking human resources and support tend to stagnate.

This situation reinforces Edwards III's view that the effectiveness of policy implementation depends heavily on the adequacy of resources, whether financial, human, or other supporting facilities. Without adequate resource support, policies will remain at the administrative level, unable to produce real change at the community level. In Kuningan Bercahaya, these resource limitations not only hampered the smooth implementation of the program but also limited the ability of the Public Order Agency (Disarpus) to evaluate, improve, and expand the program's impact on an ongoing basis.

In terms of coordination between implementing actors, the research results indicate that the relationship between the Archives and Library Service (Disarpus), village libraries, and literacy communities in Kuningan Regency has not been systematically and sustainably established. Each actor tends to carry out literacy activities separately without a standard coordination and communication mechanism. This condition results in literacy activities being sectoral, unintegrated, and sometimes overlapping between programs. For example, several literacy development activities

at the village level are carried out independently by the managers of Community Reading Parks (TBM) without coordination with Disarpus, while similar activities are also carried out by schools or local communities with the same goals.

This lack of coordination indicates that the Public Works and Public Housing Agency (Disarpus), as the primary implementing agency, has not fully functioned as a coordinator and liaison across sectors. In fact, in public policy implementation, the ability to build synergy between actors is a key factor in ensuring consistent implementation direction and policy effectiveness. When coordination is lacking, policies can potentially lose focus, resources become fragmented, and program outcomes are difficult to measure in an integrated manner. This is exacerbated by the lack of a formal communication forum that brings together all program implementing actors, such as representatives from village libraries, literacy communities, educational institutions, and village governments.

In addition to the key implementing actors, coordination across regional government agencies is also suboptimal. Synergy between the Public Information and Communications Agency (Disarpus) and the Education Agency, the Communication and Information Agency, and village governments remains ad hoc or temporary, emerging only during specific activities. Yet, these agencies have significant potential to support the sustainability of literacy programs through curriculum integration, the provision of digital resources, and village-based budget support. This weak coordination demonstrates that Kuningan Bercahaya has not yet been able to build a strong institutional network as a foundation for regional literacy governance.

According to Van Meter and Van Horn, the effectiveness of policy implementation depends not only on clear standards and resources, but also on the level of coordination between implementing organizations. Weak coordination leads to differing interpretations of policy objectives and hinders consistent implementation across bureaucratic levels. Similarly, Edwards III stated that communication and coordination between actors are crucial elements in maintaining clarity of policy messages and preventing distortions in implementation on the ground.

Thus, weak coordination between actors in the Kuningan Bercahaya program is one of the main causes of the less than optimal results achieved. To improve implementation effectiveness, the establishment of a formal coordination mechanism, such as a regional literacy communication forum or a cross-sectoral working team involving the Public Information and Communications Agency (Disarpus), the Education Office, literacy communities, and village governments, is necessary. This step is crucial to ensure that program implementation is not carried out in isolation but rather integrated into a synergistic and sustainable policy system to support community literacy improvement in Kuningan Regency.

Nevertheless, the research also found positive initiatives from implementers in the field, demonstrating a commitment to continuing literacy activities despite limited facilities and funding. Several sub-districts have even successfully developed community-based activities, such as Street Book Displays, Literacy Harvests, and the independent establishment of Community Reading Gardens (TBM). This demonstrates a bottom-up social awareness and empowerment spirit, although not yet fully facilitated by systematic policies.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the implementation of Kuningan Bercahaya has not fully met the standards for effective public policy implementation, particularly in terms of clear guidelines, cross-sector coordination, and resource availability. The program remains adaptive and dependent on the commitment of individual implementers in the field. Therefore, the local government needs to immediately develop clear implementation guidelines (juslak and juknis), strengthen cross-institutional coordination, and allocate adequate resources so that program implementation can be directed, equitable, and sustainable in improving the literacy culture of the community in Kuningan Regency.

The Role of Regional Libraries in the Kuningan Bercahaya Program

The results of the study indicate that the Kuningan Regency Regional Library plays a crucial role as a facilitator in the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program. As a public institution serving as a center for information and non-formal learning, the regional library plays not only an administrative role but also a social function in developing a culture of community literacy. Based on the theoretical framework of Ife and Tesoriero, the facilitative role encompasses seven main dimensions: social animation, mediation and negotiation, support, consensus building, group facilitation, resource utilization, and skills organization. These seven roles are evident in various forms of literacy activities developed in Kuningan Regency, although the level of implementation varies across regions.

From a social animation perspective, regional libraries play a role in raising public awareness of the importance of reading and lifelong learning. This is evident through activities such as "Parentasi Litera" (The Street Book Display), "Harvest Literacy," and "Kuningan Membaca" (The Reading Brass), which are designed to bring literacy into public spaces. These activities have successfully attracted people of all ages to interact with reading materials in a more open and inclusive manner. However, community participation remains concentrated in urban areas, while in rural areas, social animation activities remain limited due to a lack of support from the Archives and Library Service (Disarpus).

In terms of mediation and negotiation, regional libraries play a role in bridging the interests of local governments, educational institutions, and literacy communities. The Library and Library

Service (Disarpus) strives to encourage collaboration with schools and local communities to expand the reach of literacy activities. However, research has found that cross-sector coordination is not yet fully optimal. Some literacy communities still operate independently without direct connection to program policies, indicating that the library's mediation function remains partial. However, according to Ife and Tesoriero, an effective mediation role can strengthen collaboration between actors and avoid duplication of activities in the field.

Furthermore, in terms of support, the Public Library and Archives Office (Disarpus) provides books, reading materials, and training in managing reading corners (TBM) for communities who take the initiative to establish reading corners or parks in their neighborhoods. This support demonstrates the government's facilitative role in empowering communities to become independent in literacy activities. However, this support remains limited by budget allocations and limited human resources. Several TBM managers admitted they haven't received regular training, resulting in activities often stalling in the absence of strong local initiatives.

In terms of consensus-building and group facilitation, regional libraries play a role in bringing together various stakeholders concerned with literacy to develop a shared vision. This effort is carried out through regional literacy forums and meetings with reading communities. However, research shows that such forums are not yet routinely held and have not been institutionalized into a permanent structure. As a result, collaborative activities between agencies remain ad hoc, dependent on the timing of specific activities.

In terms of resource utilization and skill organization, the Library and Library Service strives to maximize available resources, both through the use of mobile libraries and collaboration with educational institutions to expand access to reading. Several librarians also serve as facilitators in digital literacy training for students and the community. These efforts demonstrate the transformation of the librarian's role from mere collection managers to educational and social agents. However, limited human resource capacity and technological resources pose major challenges in optimizing the use of these resources.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the Kuningan Regency Regional Library has largely fulfilled its facilitative role as proposed by Ife and Tesoriero, although its implementation remains uneven and has not been fully institutionalized. The success of this facilitative role depends heavily on the synergy between the government, the community, and the public, as well as policy support that allows for the strengthening of institutional capacity and the sustainability of activities. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to strengthen the role of the regional library as a center for community literacy empowerment, not only as a provider of information services, but also as a catalyst for social change in Kuningan Regency.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of the Kuningan Bercahaya program in Kuningan Regency has not been fully optimal, although it has made a positive contribution to improving the community's literacy culture. From the policy implementation aspect, several fundamental obstacles were found, such as the lack of technical implementation guidelines, limited financial and human resources, and weak coordination between implementing actors. These conditions caused the program's implementation to be uneven and dependent on local initiatives in each region. Furthermore, support from the social and political environment was partial—local governments provided policy legitimacy, but not accompanied by strong regulatory support and cross-sector funding. These findings align with the views of Van Meter and Van Horn and Grindle that the effectiveness of policy implementation is largely determined by clarity of objectives, adequate resources, inter-organizational coordination, and the environmental context in which it is implemented.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of the role of the Regional Library, this study shows that the Kuningan Library and Public Library Service (Disarpus) has acted as a facilitator in community literacy empowerment. Based on the theory of Ife and Tesoriero, this facilitative role is reflected in social animation efforts, providing support, mediating between actors, building consensus, and utilizing resources. The library strives to encourage community participation through community-based activities such as Street Book Displays and Literacy Harvests, which expand access to literacy and strengthen reading awareness. However, the implementation of this role still faces obstacles in the form of limited institutional capacity, the absence of a sustainable coordination forum, and low structural support at the regional policy level.

Overall, the implementation and role of the Regional Library in the Kuningan Bercahaya program have shown a positive trend toward community-based literacy empowerment, although they have not been consistent and have not yet reached all levels of society. To strengthen the program's success, institutional strengthening strategies, increased cross-sector synergy between the government, communities, and educational institutions, and ongoing policy support for developing a culture of literacy are needed. Thus, the regional library will function not only as an information provider but also as a catalyst for social change and a center for community learning in Kuningan Regency.

Suggestion

Based on the research results, several things need to be considered to strengthen the implementation and role of Regional Libraries in the Kuningan Bercahaya program. First, the regional government needs to develop clear implementation guidelines so that the program runs

uniformly and is easily evaluated. Second, resources need to be strengthened, both in terms of budget and the capacity of librarians and literacy managers at the village level. Third, cross-sector coordination is needed between the Public Library Service (Disarpus), the Education Office, village governments, and literacy communities to create sustainable program synergy. Fourth, Regional Libraries need to expand their role as community empowerment centers, not just information providers, through digital literacy activities, skills training, and community collaboration. With these steps, it is hoped that the Kuningan Bercahaya program can run more effectively and have a broad impact on improving community literacy in Kuningan Regency.

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