

Analysis of the Performance of Health Empowerment Policies on Improving Community Welfare After the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the performance of health empowerment policies in improving community welfare during the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery period. The focus of the study is on evaluating the effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, responsiveness, and accuracy of policies implemented by the Batu City Health Office. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving informants from local government, health workers, and program beneficiaries. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The results show that health empowerment policies in Batu City have contributed to improving health knowledge, access to basic services, and the community's adaptive capacity to health risks after the pandemic. However, several obstacles were found, including limited human resources, varying levels of community participation, and suboptimal policy integration between the macro, meso, and micro levels. Analysis of policy performance revealed that the achievement of objectives was quite effective, but not yet fully efficient and responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups. This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening policy governance, increasing empowerment capacity at the community level, and developing a sustainable evaluation model as a basis for future policy improvements. These findings are expected to enrich the public administration literature and serve as a reference for local governments in formulating more adaptive and inclusive health empowerment strategies in the post-pandemic era.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in late 2019 has had a widespread impact on various sectors of global life, including health, the economy, and public welfare. According to the World Health Organization (2023), more than 760 million cases and 6.9 million deaths have occurred globally as of mid-2023, making this pandemic one of the most significant health crises in the last five decades. This crisis has not only shaken the health systems of developed countries, but also widened health inequalities in developing countries. The OECD (2021) reports that more than 60% of developing countries experienced a decline in primary health care services due to logistical disruptions, reduced health budgets, and a shortage of health workers during the pandemic.

From a socioeconomic perspective, the pandemic has worsened the welfare of the global community. The World Bank (2022) estimates that around 70–97 million people have fallen into extreme poverty due to the loss of livelihoods during mobility restrictions. This condition is exacerbated by the weakening capacity of households to access health services, especially in Asia and Africa. In Indonesia, the Central Statistics Agency (2023) noted that most households experienced a decline in income, while poverty and social vulnerability rates increased significantly. This shows a close relationship between public health and social welfare, which emphasizes the importance of health empowerment policies in recovery efforts.

In the national context, the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2023) has positioned community empowerment as one of the pillars of health transformation. Policy focus is directed at increasing health literacy, strengthening the role of cadres, community-based health approaches, and restoring promotive and preventive services that had been suspended. This transformation is relevant in the context of regions such as Batu City, which has an economy based on tourism and is vulnerable to socioeconomic shocks. Disruptions to tourism activities during the pandemic have caused a decline in community income and weakened the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable groups. This situation places health empowerment policies as a key strategy in the recovery of welfare at the local level.

Although health empowerment has been an important research topic in the last five years, there are several research gaps that have not been comprehensively addressed. Recent literature shows that community-based empowerment can increase social resilience in times of crisis (Syafiq et al., 2022; Djalante et al., 2020). However, most studies are still limited to program implementation aspects, rather than overall policy performance. Meanwhile, findings by Wang (2021) and Li et al. (2020) show that social capital and community participation influence the effectiveness of health empowerment, but these studies have not linked these findings to the results of local government policies after the pandemic.

In addition, several studies show that health literacy inequality and unequal access to services are major obstacles to public health recovery (Suhardono et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2022). However, there are still few studies that examine how regional policy governance directly affects the effectiveness of

health empowerment. The study by Chen et al. (2023), for example, highlights the importance of governance in community-based health interventions, but the study was conducted in the context of developed countries with more stable institutional capacities. Thus, there is a need to explore how the performance of health empowerment policies in the context of local government in Indonesia can contribute to improving community welfare after the pandemic.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of literature on policy evaluation and community empowerment in the post-pandemic era. By using the policy evaluation approach developed by Dunn (2018) and considering the relevant governance dynamics in the local context, this study provides a more comprehensive analytical framework. Practically, this study provides input for local governments on how to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of health empowerment policies. Understanding the factors that support and hinder policies will help formulate more inclusive and sustainable recovery strategies.

The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects. First, this study specifically assesses the performance of health empowerment policies through a multi-criteria evaluation approach, rather than merely describing program implementation. Second, the study was conducted in the post-pandemic context, which has rarely been discussed in depth in the literature over the past five years. Third, this study combines the perspectives of the community, health workers, and local government as key actors, resulting in a more holistic analysis. Based on these conditions, this study aims to answer the main question: to what extent does the performance of health empowerment policies contribute to improving the welfare of the community in the post-pandemic period, and what factors influence its success.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Public policy is a series of government decisions designed to address public issues through structured interventions oriented toward social change. Anderson (2019) asserts that public policy reflects the government's choice to act or not act on a particular issue. In the context of health, public policy must be able to facilitate responsive, inclusive, and evidence-based health governance, especially in the face of post-pandemic challenges. The WHO (2021) asserts that post-pandemic health policy requires countries to strengthen primary health systems, improve health literacy, and empower communities through promotive and preventive interventions. This is in line with Dye's (2020) view that health policy is not merely about improving services but also about increasing the capacity of communities to maintain their own health.

Policy performance is a fundamental indicator in assessing the success of public policy implementation. Van Meter and Van Horn (2019) state that policy performance is influenced by communication between actors, the disposition of implementers, resources, and the surrounding social conditions. Dunn (2018) then developed an evaluative approach that includes effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and accuracy as the main criteria for policy assessment. In the context of post-pandemic health empowerment, policy

performance must be viewed in terms of a program's ability to meet community needs, reduce health vulnerabilities, and have a real impact on socioeconomic recovery (Chen et al., 2023). Thus, policy performance analysis should not only focus on program outputs but also on outcomes and long-term impacts on community welfare.

Health empowerment is a strategic process to improve the capacity of individuals and communities to control their health determinants. According to Gibson (2020), health empowerment involves strengthening psychological capacity, skills, and access to information so that communities can make independent health decisions. Zimmerman (2019) emphasizes that empowerment occurs when communities have control, critical awareness, and access to resources. The WHO (2021) also states that health empowerment is a key pillar of community-based public health, which includes improving health literacy, community participation, and involvement in decision-making processes. In the post-pandemic era, health empowerment has become an important tool for improving the community's ability to deal with new health risks, adopt healthy behaviors, and maintain family well-being.

Community well-being is defined as the fulfillment of basic needs, improved quality of life, and opportunities for every individual to develop socially, economically, and health-wise. The OECD (2020) emphasizes that community well-being includes objective dimensions such as physical health, income, and public services, as well as subjective dimensions such as life satisfaction and a sense of security. In the context of post-pandemic recovery, UNDP (2022) found that community well-being is largely determined by the effectiveness of government interventions, particularly in health services and community empowerment. Chen et al. (2023) added that well-managed community-based empowerment policies can improve social resilience and long-term well-being. Therefore, research on the performance of health empowerment policies should be directed at understanding how these policies affect community welfare as a whole.

Policy evaluation in a modern perspective view that policy assessment must consider the social context, actor dynamics, and the sustainability of program impacts. Weiss (2020) argues that policy evaluation should not only measure quantitative achievements but also changes in the quality of life of the community as a result of the policy. Patton (2021) emphasizes the importance of stakeholder-based evaluation involving implementers, beneficiaries, and decision-makers. This approach is particularly relevant in the evaluation of health empowerment, as the empowerment process involves dynamic interactions between the government, health workers, and the community. UNDP (2021) also emphasizes that effective evaluation must consider governance principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, and coordination effectiveness. Thus, governance becomes an important framework that influences the successful implementation of health empowerment policies.

In the context of health governance, governance refers to coordination mechanisms, leadership, policy integration, and community involvement in decision-making (Chen et al., 2023). Good governance is important to ensure that health empowerment policies are implemented effectively, fairly, and

responsively to community needs. UNDP (2021) emphasizes that strong governance enables cross-sector collaboration, minimizes service disparities, and maintains the sustainability of empowerment programs. In this study, governance serves as the analytical basis for understanding how interactions between actors and institutions influence policy performance and community welfare.

Based on the above theories, the relationship between health empowerment policies, policy performance, and community welfare can be understood as a causal relationship that influences each other. Health empowerment policies are interventions designed by the government; policy performance determines the success of these interventions; and community welfare is an outcome influenced by the effectiveness of policy implementation. This framework is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context, when socioeconomic recovery is highly dependent on the success of health empowerment policies. Thus, this theoretical study provides a conceptual foundation for research on the analysis of health empowerment policy performance in improving public welfare in the post-pandemic period.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze in depth the performance of health empowerment policies in improving community welfare after the pandemic. A qualitative approach was chosen because it provides an opportunity to understand social phenomena comprehensively, based on the views, experiences, and perceptions of the actors involved in policy implementation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study design was used to intensively explore the context of the implementation of health empowerment policies carried out by the Batu City Health Office, enabling researchers to understand the factors that influenced its success (Yin, 2019).

Research informants were determined using purposive sampling, which is the selection of informants who are considered to have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of health empowerment policies. Informants consisted of structural officials from the Batu City Health Office, health workers implementing the program, health cadres, and beneficiary communities. Data collection was carried out using three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to gain an understanding of the informants' perspectives on the effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, responsiveness, and accuracy of the policy. Field observations were conducted to see the dynamics of program implementation firsthand, while documentation was used to examine planning documents, activity reports, and official policies related to health empowerment.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), which includes three main stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The data condensation process includes sorting, grouping, and interpreting data from various sources. The condensed data was then presented in the form of thematic matrices, narratives, and patterns of relationships between variables, facilitating

the identification of trends and the meaning of the findings. The conclusion drawing stage was carried out in stages and verified through a triangulation process to ensure that the conclusions were truly supported by empirical data.

Data validity is maintained through source and method triangulation techniques, by comparing interview, observation, and documentation data from various informants. The validity of the findings is reinforced through a member checking process, which involves clarifying the interpretation results with the informants, as well as an audit trail to ensure the transparency of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2019). The scope of the research is focused on health empowerment policies implemented by the Batu City Health Office in the post-pandemic period, while variables outside the health domain are only analyzed to the extent that there is a direct connection. This method is designed to produce a comprehensive understanding of the performance of health empowerment policies and their contribution to the welfare of the community in the post-pandemic period.

RESULTS

This study produced a number of findings related to the performance of health empowerment policies implemented by the Batu City Health Office in the post-pandemic period. These findings were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and analysis of official documentation. In general, health empowerment policies have made a positive contribution to increasing public health awareness, strengthening the role of cadres, and expanding public access to promotive health services. However, the findings also reveal significant challenges in policy implementation, particularly related to resource constraints, disparities in community participation between regions, and suboptimal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

To provide a structured overview of the research results, the collected data were analyzed using a thematic approach based on Dunn's policy evaluation framework, which includes policy effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, responsiveness, and appropriateness. This thematic analysis was conducted through a process of data condensation, categorization, and pattern identification from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The following table aims to summarize the research findings systematically, making it easier for readers to understand how each element of policy performance contributes to improving community welfare after the pandemic. This table also helps to show the relationship between indicators and areas that still require policy strengthening.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of Health Empowerment Policy Performance

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Field Findings	Implications
Effectiveness	Improving health literacy	The community showed an increase in understanding of healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and family health.	The education program is effective and needs to be expanded to cover more areas.
Efficiency	The role of health cadres	Active cadres played a role in education, home visits, and organizing activities.	Further training is needed to strengthen the competence of cadres.
Responsiveness	Resource utilization	Areas with adequate human resources show higher efficiency	The distribution of health workers needs to be optimized.
Policy Accuracy	Budget and facilities	Limited budgets require adjustments to activity priorities	Cross-sector collaboration is needed to support financing.
	Community services	The government responds quickly to needs for education, vaccinations, and basic services	Responses to vulnerable groups need to be improved.
Main Themes	Access for vulnerable groups	The elderly and people with disabilities still face barriers to access	A proactive strategy or mobile services are needed.
Effectiveness	Suitability to local needs	Programs are in line with post-pandemic recovery needs	Impact evaluations have not been conducted regularly.
	Monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation reports are inconsistent across regions	Data-based M&E systems need to be strengthened.

Table 2. Summary of Policy Performance Assessment Based on Dunn's Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Assessment	Field Evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Effectiveness	Quite high	Education is going well, cadres are active	Effective promotional activities	Coverage is not yet evenly distributed
Efficiency	Moderate	Variation in human resources and infrastructure	Several efficient regions	Limited human resources and budget
Adequacy	Moderate	Programs address basic needs	Relevant post-pandemic	Has not yet reached vulnerable groups
Responsiveness	Good	Government responds quickly to complaints	Responsive services	Vulnerable groups still face obstacles
Accuracy	Quite accurate	Programs are appropriate to the local context	Recovery according to community needs	Monitoring is not yet optimal

Table 3. Data Triangulation Results

Data Sources	Consistent Findings	Inconsistent Findings	Interpretation
Interviews	Cadres play a strong role in empowerment	Uneven community participation	Consistency on the theme of effectiveness
Observations	Program implementation is good in several regions	Uneven facilities	Infrastructure inequality
Documentation	Programs are in line with strategic plans	Incomplete monitoring and evaluation reports	Need to strengthen reporting systems

The tables above show that health empowerment policies in Batu City have a strong program foundation that is relevant to the community's post-pandemic recovery needs. The theme of effectiveness shows positive achievements through increased health literacy and the active role of cadres. However, challenges still arise in terms of efficiency, particularly related to resource distribution and budget constraints. The government's responsiveness is considered good, but vulnerable groups still need more adaptive and needs-based interventions. Meanwhile, the accuracy of the policy reflects that the program is in line with local needs, but it is not yet supported by a strong and integrated monitoring and evaluation system.

Data triangulation analysis confirms that although the policy has been implemented as planned, variations in implementation between regions remain a major obstacle to achieving equitable results. Differences in the level of readiness of human resources, health facilities, and community participation have led to variations in program effectiveness between regions. Therefore, the results of this study underscore the need to improve governance, strengthen the capacity of implementers, and refine program evaluation mechanisms in a more systematic and sustainable manner. These findings form the basis for improving health empowerment policies in the future in order to improve community welfare in a more inclusive and comprehensive manner.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the post-pandemic health empowerment policy implemented by the Batu City Health Office has contributed significantly to improving community health capacity through strengthening health literacy, expanding access to promotive services, and increasing the role of community cadres. The improvement in community health literacy post-pandemic is an important finding, in line with the WHO (2022) report which states that health literacy is the main foundation of community resilience in facing new health threats and accelerating socio-economic recovery. Additionally, research conducted by Thomas et al. (2021) shows that communities with high levels of health literacy tend to adapt more quickly to post-pandemic health protocols and have lower health risks. This supports the findings of this study, which show that community-based health empowerment policies can bring about long-term behavioral change.

In terms of effectiveness, this study found that the role of health cadres is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of policies. Cadres contribute to disseminating information, assisting the community, and organizing health activities, which strengthen the social function of the community. These findings are in line with the research by Lestari and Kurniawan (2021) and are also supported by an international study by Rahman et al. (2022), which confirms that health cadres play a key role in bridging the gap between the government and the community in health empowerment efforts. However, the analysis also shows disparities in participation between regions, caused by variations in the quality of cadres and the level of social participation of the community. This condition is relevant to Dunn's (2018) policy evaluation theory, which states that the success of a policy is not only influenced by its design and objectives but also by the

administrative and social capacity of the implementing agencies and target communities.

In terms of efficiency, this study found a number of obstacles related to post-pandemic budget constraints, unequal distribution of human resources, and limited supporting facilities in certain regions. This is in line with the findings of Nurhayati and Putra (2021), who stated that the level of policy efficiency in the health sector is directly influenced by budget availability, the workload of health workers, and the adequacy of supporting facilities. In addition, research by Gupta & Singh (2023) shows that local governments facing post-pandemic fiscal pressures tend to experience a decline in the quality of public services, including community health services. However, regions with strong infrastructure and active cadres show higher efficiency, emphasizing the importance of institutional capacity in promoting efficiency (Santos et al., 2020).

Policy responsiveness showed fairly good results, especially in meeting the needs for information, vaccination, and community promotional services after the pandemic. Local governments were considered responsive in addressing urgent health needs, in line with the findings of Santoso et al. (2022), who reported that the success of post-pandemic health recovery was greatly influenced by the ability of local governments to adapt quickly to changes in community needs. However, vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and low-income communities still face barriers in accessing health empowerment services. These findings reinforce Fleuren et al.'s (2020) argument that health interventions must be designed based on the needs of specific demographic groups in order to be more inclusive.

In terms of policy accuracy, the study shows that health empowerment policies are in line with the needs of post-pandemic community recovery. However, the lack of a data-based monitoring and evaluation system makes it difficult for implementers to comprehensively measure the success of implementation. This condition is in line with the findings of Aisyah and Hakim (2022) and the OECD (2023), which emphasize that a strong monitoring system is essential in health programs in order to identify implementation obstacles and measure the impact of policies more objectively. In addition, research by Luo et al. (2022) shows that community-based health programs tend to be successful when program supervision is carried out systematically and continuously.

Overall, this discussion confirms that the health empowerment policy in Batu City has structural success in terms of effectiveness and responsiveness, but requires strengthening in terms of efficiency, equitable implementation, and monitoring governance. The findings of this study enrich the literature on post-pandemic health policy performance by emphasizing the importance of integrating community capacity, policy support, and program governance (Wong et al., 2021). In practical terms, these findings provide recommendations for local governments to improve resource equity, strengthen the role of cadres, and develop more modern evaluation mechanisms, including the use of digital data.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the post-pandemic health empowerment policy implemented by the Batu City Health Office has contributed significantly to improving public health literacy, strengthening the role of health cadres, and expanding access to promotive health services, although its implementation still faces challenges in the form of limited human resources, disparities in participation between regions, and a monitoring and evaluation system that is not yet optimal. This program has demonstrated its effectiveness in building community health resilience, but its sustainability requires improvements in governance and equitable distribution of resources. Therefore, it is recommended that local governments strengthen policy governance by increasing the capacity of health cadres and personnel, optimizing the distribution of resources and budgets, and developing a more systematic integrated monitoring and evaluation system based on performance indicators and information technology to ensure the measurability of program impact. In addition, health empowerment strategies need to be designed to be more inclusive, taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and low-income communities. Strengthening cross-sector collaboration, increasing active community participation, and integrating health empowerment programs with the regional development agenda are strategic steps needed to ensure that these policies are not only effective in the short term but also sustainable and capable of improving the overall welfare of the community in the context of post-pandemic recovery.

FURTHER STUDY

Further research should use mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of health empowerment policies on community welfare. Comparative studies between regions are also important to identify variations in implementation and factors that influence program success. In addition, the development of digital technology-based evaluation models, including data-based monitoring systems, needs to be explored so that the policy monitoring process is more accurate, efficient, and sustainable.

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