IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WEST JAVA STOPAN PROGRAM IN REDUCING UNDERAGE MARRIGE, AS PER GEORGE EDWARD III

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Abstract

Underage marriage is a complex social problem in Indonesia, including in West Java Province which is ranked 3rd highest nationally for child marriage. This practice not only violates children's basic rights, but also has an impact on high school dropout rates, structural poverty, and vulnerability to domestic violence. The West Java Provincial Government through the Women's Empowerment Office for Child Protection and Family Planning (DP3AKB) created the Stop Child Marriage (STOPAN) program to formulate a comprehensive policy approach and collaborate across sectors with the government, academia, media, businesses and communities in West Java with the aim of significantly reducing the rate of child marriage. This study aims to analyze how the implementation of the STOPAN program in West Java Province in reducing the rate of underage marriage. This study also aims to analyze the extent of STOPAN's effectiveness in reducing underage marriage when viewed from the perspective of George Edward III's public policy implementation theory. This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a case study method. The results of the study show that the implementation of the STOPAN program shows partial effectiveness in reducing the rate of child marriage. This is shown by the decrease in the number of marriage dispensation applications in districts/cities in the West Java region. Based on data from the High Court of Religion of West Java Province, marriage dispensation in West Java Province tends to decrease during the STOPAN program, in 2021 there were 6,794 cases, in 2022 there were 5,523 cases, in 2023 there were 4599, and in 2024 there were 3,631. However, there are still many people who practice serial marriage. Index of the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who are married or living together before the age of 18 according to 2021-2024. In 2021 it amounted to 10.09%, in 2022 it amounted to 8.65%, in 2023 it amounted to 6.79, in 2024 it amounted to 5.78%. The child marriage index during the STOPAN program period in 2021-2024 experienced an average annual decrease of 1.45%. Using George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, it can be concluded that the success of the STOPAN program is largely determined by four factors: policy communication, resources, implementing disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The STOPAN program shows a fairly good performance in terms of communication and resources, but is still weak in implementation consistency (implementing disposition) and is not optimal in the monitoring and evaluation structure at the local level.

I. Introduction

Marriage has a very important position in the social life of the community. Through marriage, two individuals of different sexes—a man and a woman—can be bound in a relationship that is legal and religious (Hijrawati *et al*., 2022). According to Muhammad Abu Zahrah, marriage is a contract with legal consequences, where the formation of family relationships is the basis for the emergence of rights and obligations between married couples (Kosim, 2019). Furthermore, marriage is not only seen as a social contract, but also as worship and the sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) which will bring rewards to those who perform it (Wafa, 2018). As stated in the hadith narrated by Bukhori and Muslim:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ مَسْعُوْدٍ قَالَ لَنَا رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ :يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ اَلْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَغَضُّ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلفَرْجِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وِجَاءٌ (متفق عليه)

From Abdullah bin Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said to us: "O young men! Whoever among you is able to marry, then marry. Because he can lower his gaze and keep his genitals. And whoever is not able to do so, let him fast because it can withstand (Arifandi, 2018).

From the above hadith we know that marriage is a sunnah of the Prophet or a behavior that the Prophet did as an example for his people in addition to being a guide and human need. So, in marriage it must include the intention to perform the sunnah of the Prophet or follow in the footsteps of the Prophet. In addition, through marriage a man and a woman have offspring, even by carrying out marriage they are able to maintain the genitals and honor from despicable acts.

In Islamic law, a marriage is declared valid if it fulfills the principles and conditions that have been set, regardless of whether there is an official registration by the state (Akbar, 2021). This view is in line with the provisions in Article 4 of the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), which affirms that a marriage is considered valid if it is carried out according to Islamic law, as stipulated in Article 2 paragraph (1) of Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage (Fadilah, 2019).

The definition of marriage in KHI Article 2 refers to a solid contract (mitsaqan ghalidzan) to carry out Allah's commands and carry out worship. Meanwhile, Law Number 1 of 1974 Article 1 defines marriage as a physical and mental bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family based on the One Godhead (Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage).

Child marriage is still a complex social issue and has a wide impact on various aspects of life, including education, health, economy, and the protection of children's rights. As the province with the largest population in Indonesia, West Java faces significant challenges in reducing the rate of early marriajige. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, the prevalence of child marriage in this region is still quite high, with several districts such as Indramayu, Garut, and Cianjur recording the highest incidence rate compared to other regions (BPS Bandung, 2022).

This problem does not stand alone, but is influenced by a number of structural factors such as the low level of public education, poverty conditions, limited access to information, and the still strong social and cultural norms that justify the practice of child marriage. In some contexts, child marriage is seen as a solution to avoid promiscuity or as an effort to reduce the

economic burden on the family. But in reality, this practice actually increases the risk of domestic violence, increases the dropout rate among adolescents, and triggers various reproductive health disorders at an early age (KemenPPPA, 2020).

The practice of early marriage has received serious attention in national regulations. This is reflected in Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, as well as Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. In the provision, a child is defined as an individual who is under the age of 18 (Law of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014). A significant change that occurred was the increase in the minimum age limit for marriage from the previous 16 years for women to 19 years for both sexes, to ensure that married couples have psychological maturity and readiness for married life (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2019).

In a number of areas in West Java Province, the practice of early marriage still occurs with various complex backgrounds. Factors such as structural poverty, school dropouts, and cultural constructs that consider it appropriate to marry young are the main causes that encourage parents to marry their children off before they reach adulthood (West Java STOPAN, 2022). This phenomenon is also not limited to the local level, but is a global problem that is still rampant in developing countries. The causes include cultural internalization, religious perceptions, parents' perspectives, and other economic and social factors (UNICEF, 2021).

Child marriage is essentially a form of violation of the basic rights of children, especially the right to live a decent life and get education. In addition, the health risks associated with this practice are very high, especially for girls who are more prone to complications during pregnancy and childbirth when compared to adult women. Not only that, psychological impacts such as chronic anxiety, severe depression, and even suicidal tendencies, are real consequences of early marriage (WHO, 2020). In the context of domestic relations, children who marry at a young age are also vulnerable to domestic violence (KDRT). Research conducted by Plan International (cited by Djamilah) shows that 44% of girls who get married at a young age experience high-intensity domestic violence, while the remaining 56% experience low-frequency domestic violence (Djamilah, 2014). This data shows that young couples generally do not have emotional maturity or readiness to run a healthy home life.

When compared to the various risks and negative impacts, the benefits of early marriage are very limited. Some of the arguments that are often put forward are to prevent free sex, prevent sexually transmitted diseases, or biological and social reasons such as avoiding too long an age gap between parents and children. From a religious perspective, early marriage is also considered a legitimate way to avoid adultery and legally channel biological needs. Nevertheless, these reasons are not commensurate with the long-term adverse effects of both physical, psychological, and social.

The West Java Provincial Government, through the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning (DP3AKB), has initiated a campaign entitled "Stop West Java Child Marriage" (STOPAN Jabar). This program is aimed at raising public awareness about the negative impact of child marriage and the importance of prevention through education and socialization (West Java Provincial, 2025).

Based on data available on the official website of DP3AKB West Java Province, it is recorded that West Java is one of the provinces with a fairly high rate of child marriage cases. This phenomenon raises concerns because it can interfere with the growth of the younger generation, especially in the aspects of reproductive health, education, and children's economic and social resilience. According to the 2020 Annual Report of the Ministry of Women's

Empowerment and Child Protection, the rate of child marriage still shows an alarming trend in various regions, including West Java.

After several years of implementation, various field reports show that the success of STOPAN still varies between districts/cities in West Java. Some regions showed a significant decrease in the number of marriage dispensations in the Religious Courts, while other regions were stagnant or increasing. This raises the question of the extent to which STOPAN's public policy has been effectively implemented in accordance with the main variables of policy effectiveness according to George C. Edwards III's theory, namely communication, resources, disposition (executive attitude), and bureaucratic structure.

Research on the effectiveness of the implementation of the STOPAN policy is important because it is able to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent to which this strategic and collaborative public policy has been successfully translated into real practice. This study can also identify inhibiting and supporting factors in its implementation, both at the macro (provincial government) and micro (district/city government) levels.

2. Literature Review

In conducting research, a literature review is very important as proof that the research conducted has differences from previous research, the following previous research includes: Nurnazli (2024) in her research entitled Strengthening Regulations in the Prevention and Prevention of Child Marriage emphasized that strengthening regulations related to child marriage requires a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach. This problem cannot be understood from only one dimension, but must be studied through a multidisciplinary perspective involving legal, economic, social, cultural, and political aspects. Therefore, consistent regulations are needed related to the age limit of children in all applicable laws and regulations in Indonesia. In addition, the active participation of various stakeholders such as policymakers, law enforcement officials, religious and traditional leaders, educators, health workers, and parents is crucial in efforts to address and prevent early marriage comprehensively (Nurnazli, 2024).

The similarity of this research with the study of the STOPAN Program lies in the importance of the role of policy makers in reducing the rate of child marriage. The difference is that Nurnazli's research focuses more on recommendations to strengthen regulations, while research on STOPAN emphasizes the effectiveness of the implementation of the program initiated by the West Java Province Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning (DP3AKB).

Meanwhile, a study conducted by Annisatul Insani Pratama et al. (2022) entitled Policy Implementation of the STOP KABUR Program as an Effort to Prevent Child Marriage in Garut Regency in 2021–2022 examines the implementation of government programs in preventing child marriage at the local level. This study uses policy implementation theories from Donald Van Meter and Carl Van Horn as an analytical framework, and qualitative research methods by collecting data through literature studies, interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study show that the STOP KABUR program has not run optimally. The main obstacles found include the absence of concrete success indicators, limited human resources and funding, uneven socialization, lack of use of social media as an educational tool, and challenges from the economic, social, and political environment that have not fully supported policy implementation (Annisatul, 2022).

This research has the same focus area, namely West Java Province, and both discuss

efforts to reduce the child marriage rate. However, the difference is that STOPAN is a provincial-level initiative initiated by DP3AKB West Java, while STOP KABUR is implemented at the district level (Garut).

Another relevant research is the work of Desi Amalia (2017) entitled Underage Marriage Perspective of Laws and Regulations in Indonesia. In his research, he highlighted the still strong practice of early marriage in society which raises pros and cons. Some people see that this practice causes more harm (maḍarat) than the benefits. The negative impacts of underage marriage include the increase in the birth rate which has an impact on population growth, the decline in the quality of maternal and child health due to lack of nutritional intake, and the potential for domestic violence due to the mental unpreparedness of young couples (Desi, 2017).

The similarities between Desi's research and the study of STOPAN lie in the discussion of legal and social issues related to underage marriage. However, research on STOPAN focuses more on the implementation of government programs in reducing the rate of early marriage, especially in the West Java region.

3. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative method, which is an approach that produces descriptive data in the form of narratives or words. This approach is inductive, with the main aim of understanding the social phenomena that are the object of study in depth (Fadilah, 2019). In this context, the research aims to provide a clear and comprehensive picture to support the analysis process of the problem being researched. The focus of the study is directed at the issue of child marriage, with special emphasis on the implementation of the West Java STOPAN program initiated by the West Java Provincial Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning Office (DP3AKB) as a strategy to prevent child marriage.

4. Results and Discussion

Implementation Of Stopan West Java In Reducing Underage Marriage In West Java

The STOPAN JABAR (Stop Child Marriage in West Java) program is a collaborative initiative designed to prevent child marriage in the West Java region. This program involves synergy between various sectors, including elements of government, higher education institutions, civil society, business actors, and mass media. The main goal of this movement is to reduce the rate of child marriage, as well as support efforts to prevent violence against women and children, reduce the divorce rate, and prevent stunting in order to create a healthy and quality family (West Java Province Women's Empowerment Office, 2025). STOPAN JABAR was officially launched on July 28, 2021 and was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the West Java Provincial Government through the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning Office (DP3AKB) with various strategic partners such as the West Java Provincial BKKBN Representative, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Java Province, and the Bandung Religious High Court. The memorandum of agreement also involves actors within the pentahelix framework.

Over time, the implementation of STOPAN JABAR continues to expand by involving more stakeholders, including vertical government agencies, provincial level regional apparatus, regency/city government agencies, universities, the private sector, the media, and communities engaged in the field of resilience and family development. This program is also active in carrying

out communication, information, and education (KIE) as well as socialization in a sustainable and comprehensive manner to the community.

The implementation of the STOPAN (Stop Child Marriage) program in West Java Province has a solid legal basis within the framework of national laws and regulations. The revision of Law Number 1 of 1974 through Law Number 16 of 2019 is a strategic step in strengthening efforts to prevent child marriage. In the change, the minimum age for women to marry is raised from 16 to 19 years old, so that it is equivalent to the minimum age for men, as stated in Article 7 paragraph (1) of the revised Marriage Law (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2019).

In addition, the operational basis of STOPAN also refers to the National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Marriage (Stranas PPA) 2020–2030 issued by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA). This policy document is designed to be an integrated guideline between central and local governments, with a participatory and rights-based approach to children's rights (KemenPPPA, 2020). At the regional level, the West Java Provincial Government through the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning Office (DP3AKB) has prepared a Regional Action Plan (RAD) and established a cross-sector coordination forum to support the implementation of the STOPAN program.

From an institutional perspective, this program includes various agencies, such as the Education Office, the Health Office, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), the police, and the prosecutor's office that have a mandate in child protection. Its implementation is also strengthened through regional policies, such as Governor's Regulations, Regent or Mayor Decrees (SK), and even Regional Regulations (Perda) and Village Regulations (Perdes), which make STOPAN an an interdisciplinary and multidimensional policy.

The implementation of the STOPAN JABAR (Stop Child Marriage in West Java) program shows a multi-sectoral approach and is based on cross-institutional collaboration. One of the initial strategies was to strengthen joint commitment to prevent child marriage, which was manifested through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the West Java Provincial Government—through DP3AKB West Java—with BKKBN Representatives, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the West Java High Court of Religion. In addition, Cooperation Agreements (PKS) were also carried out with a number of universities, including the Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), the University of Education Indonesia (UPI), UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, and Siliwangi University. Similar commitments are also strengthened by the involvement of regional apparatus such as the Education Office, Health Office, Social Service, Youth and Sports Office, Population and Civil Registration Office, Community and Village Empowerment Office, and the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of West Java Province.

As a form of strengthening local regulations, the Governor of West Java issued Circular Letter Number 132/PA.03/KESRA of 2021 concerning the STOPAN JABAR Program. This program is also implemented through various communication, information, and education (KIE) strategies to the community, including in the form of public campaigns, seminars, and webinars on family resilience and child parenting. Optimizing the role of counseling services is also carried out through Family Learning Centers (PUSPAGA) at the provincial and district/city levels. In this context, a joint commitment was signed between PUSPAGA BALAREA West Java and a number of PUSPAGA in the region, such as PUSPAGA Bundaku (Tasikmalaya Regency), Peri Langit (Sumedang Regency), Sabilulungan (Garut Regency), and Manis Tatar Galuh (Ciamis Regency).

The role of community actors is also an important aspect. DP3AKB optimizes field personnel and partners such as 475 family resilience motivators (Motekar), 263 Family Planning Examples, and West Java Women's School Alumni to provide awareness to the public about the risks of child marriage. The West Java Regional Children's Forum (FAD) also plays a role in increasing peer participation in prevention activities. KIE activities are directly aimed at various community groups, including students, teachers, village heads, religious extension workers, and headmen. In addition, the dissemination of information is also expanded through social media, radio, television, and online media.

As a form of strategic planning, a Draft Regional Action Plan (RAD) for the Prevention of Child Marriage was prepared. In order to strengthen the capacity of implementers, guidelines for increasing the capacity of STOPAN JABAR volunteers were prepared and training was held in various regions, such as five villages in Tasikmalaya Regency, one village in Sumedang Regency, one village in Ciamis Regency, and one village in Garut Regency. This activity also includes Training of Trainers (ToT) training for local champion facilitators involving the PPA Affairs Office, PUSPAGA, field personnel such as Motekar and Teladan, PKK cadres, and the Regional Children's Forum.

The implementation of the STOPAN program shows partial effectiveness in reducing the rate of child marriage. This is shown by the decrease in the number of marriage dispensation applications in districts/cities in the West Java region. Based on data from the High Court of Religion of West Java Province, marriage dispensation in West Java Province tends to decrease during the STOPAN program, in 2021 there were 6,794 cases, in 2022 there were 5,523 cases, in 2023 there were 4599, and in 2024 there were 3,631 (West Java Provincial High Court of Religion, Marriage Dispensation Statistical Report for 2021–2024). However, there are still many people who practice serial marriage. Index of the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who are married or living together before the age of 18 according to 2021-2024. In 2021 it amounted to 10.09%, in 2022 it amounted to 8.65%, in 2023 it amounted to 6.79, in 2024 it amounted to 5.78%. The child marriage index during the STOPAN program period in 2021-2024 experienced an average annual decrease of 1.45% (BPS, 2024).

Theory Of Public Policy Implementation George Edward III

George C. Edwards III views policy implementation as a dynamic and complex process, where various elements interact with each other and influence the course of policy implementation. In this framework, implementation cannot be seen as a purely linear activity, but rather as a series of processes involving various factors that are interrelated and contribute to its success or failure (Solichin, 2008). Edwards emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding in depth the factors that influence policy implementation, in order to assess how much influence each of these factors has on policy realization on the ground (George, 1980). For this reason, in the study of policy implementation, he suggested that two fundamental questions be asked first: First, what are the prerequisites for successful policy implementation? Second, what are the main factors that are most decisive in the policy implementation process.

In answer to both questions, Edwards proposed four key variables that play a significant role in supporting or hindering the success of implementation. The four variables are: *communication*, resources, *disposition*, and bureaucratic *structure*. According to him, the interaction between the four elements must run synergistically, because failure in one aspect alone can weaken the effectiveness of the overall implementation. Therefore, the success of a public policy depends not only on the quality of its formulation, but also on how the policy is

translated and implemented through a systematic implementation process that is responsive to existing social dynamics.

According to Edward, the public policy implementation model is divided into the following elements:

a. Communication

Communication is an essential process in conveying information from the messenger (communicator) to the recipient of the message (communicator), which in the context of public policy means the process of distributing information from policy makers to policy implementers (Lasswell, 2006). Policy communication is not only informative, but also has a strategic function in ensuring that each party involved fully understands the meaning, objectives, and direction of the policy that has been set.

Widodo emphasized that the delivery of policy information must be carried out systematically to the implementers so that they understand well the content of the policy, the goals to be achieved, the target *group* to be targeted, and the operational steps needed in its implementation (Joko, 2021). Thus, effective communication will help implementers in preparing all aspects related to the implementation of policies optimally and in line with the policy orientation that has been formulated.

In the context of policy implementation, communication includes three main dimensions: information transformation (*transmission*), information clarity, and information consistency (*consistency*). The transformation dimension demands that information be conveyed not only to policy implementers, but also to target groups and other relevant stakeholders. The clarity dimension emphasizes the importance of presenting information in a clear, concise, and easy-to-understand manner, in order to prevent misinterpretations that can interfere with policy implementation (George, 1980). Meanwhile, the consistency dimension requires that the information conveyed does not experience changes in meaning or contradictions, because inconsistencies can cause confusion, inconsistencies in implementation, and even resistance from implementers and policy beneficiaries.

b. Resources

In the process of implementing policies, the availability of resources plays a very crucial role. George C. Edwards III as quoted by Widodo, emphasized that no matter how good and clear policy formulation is—both in terms of clarity of substance and consistency of rules—it will not guarantee successful implementation if policy implementers do not have adequate resources. In other words, without sufficient resource support, ideally-designed policies will only stop at the document level without the power of concrete realization on the ground (George, 2006). Resources in this context are not limited to physical or financial aspects, but include all elements that can support the effective and efficient implementation of policies. This includes competent human resources, adequate budget availability, supporting facilities, access to accurate information, and legal and administrative authority. These five components must be proportionately present, because deficiencies in one aspect can hinder the performance of policy implementers and reduce the overall quality of program implementation (Budi, 2012).

Therefore, in the framework of public policy implementation, the fulfillment of resources is not only a technical need, but also reflects the seriousness and commitment of the

government or the implementing party to the achievement of policy goals. Effective policies require systemic support from all elements of resources so that the vision that has been formulated can be realized in real social reality.

In the context of policy implementation, resources refer to all elements that can be used to support the optimal achievement of policy goals. The existence and adequacy of resources are fundamental aspects that determine the extent to which a policy can be implemented effectively. Without adequate resource support, even well-formulated policies have the potential to fail in their implementation stages. This resource includes several important components. First, human resources, which includes the quality and competence of policy implementers. Second, the budget, which is the financial support needed to finance all implementation activities. Third, facilities, including facilities and infrastructure that support the smooth implementation process. Fourth, the information needed so that decision-making in policy implementation is on target and data-based. Finally, authority, namely legal legitimacy and administrative authority needed so that the implementers can carry out their duties legally and effectively.

The resources here relate to any resources that can be leveraged to support the successful implementation of the policy. These resources include human resources, budgets, facilities, information and authorities which are described as follows:

1) Human Resources;

The success of policy implementation is highly dependent on the support of human resources that are not only adequate in number, but also superior in terms of quality. The quality of human resources includes aspects of technical skills, level of professionalism, dedication to work, and competence in accordance with the field of task carried out. Meanwhile, quantity refers to the adequacy of the number of personnel to reach and serve all policy target groups proportionally. The imbalance between the quality and quantity of human resources can hinder the effectiveness of policy implementation in the field. Without reliable and sufficient human resource support, the implementation process tends to run slowly, not optimally, and even has the potential to fail in achieving the goals that have been set.

2) Budget*;*

In the context of policy implementation, the budget aspect plays a vital element related to the availability of funds or investments needed to ensure the continuity of the implementation of a program. Without adequate budget support, the policies that have been formulated risk not being implemented optimally. Adequate budget allocation not only allows operational activities to run as planned, but is also a prerequisite for ensuring the effective achievement of policy goals and objectives (George, 2006).

3) Facilities;

Facilities and infrastructure are important components that help determine the effectiveness of policy implementation. The availability of adequate facilities, such as operational buildings, suitable land, and administrative supporting equipment, is a significant supporting factor in supporting the smooth implementation of a program. Without proper infrastructure support, the implementation process risks facing technical barriers that can hinder the achievement of overall policy objectives (Sedarmayanti, 2009).

4) Information and *Authority*;

Information is one of the crucial elements in supporting the successful implementation of policies, especially if the information is relevant, accurate, and adequate related to the procedures for implementing the policy concerned. Without clear information, policy implementers can experience difficulties in understanding the direction and technical

operations of the policies that must be carried out. On the other hand, formal authorities or authorities have a strategic role in ensuring the implementation of policies so that they run in accordance with the goals that have been set. The authority gives legitimacy to the implementer to act, as well as being an instrument to ensure that policies are implemented consistently and lawfully within the applicable legal and administrative framework.

c. Disposition;

One of the important aspects in the successful implementation of public policy is the behavioral tendencies or characteristics of individual policy implementers. This character reflects an internal attitude and orientation that will determine how an implementer understands, appreciates, and implements policies in accordance with the goals that have been set. Among the characters that are considered essential are honesty and commitment. Honesty encourages the implementer to stick to the principles of the policy and not deviate from the provisions that have been formulated. Meanwhile, high commitment fosters enthusiasm, loyalty, and dedication in carrying out their functions, duties, authorities, and responsibilities professionally.

The personal attitude of policy implementers greatly affects the effectiveness of implementation in the field. If the implementer has integrity and a good work ethic, then the implementation process will run in line with the will of the policymakers. Conversely, if the implementer shows an unsupportive attitude—such as lack of enthusiasm, low compliance with the rules, or a conflict of interest—then it can be a serious obstacle to the implementation of the policy (Budi,2012). Therefore, the aspect of the disposition or attitude of the implementer is not only complementary, but is a substantive element in ensuring that the policy runs in the expected direction.

d. *Bureucratic Structure*;

Organizational structure plays a very decisive role in the process of implementing public policy. In this case, the organizational structure can be seen through two main dimensions, namely the operational mechanism and the overall bureaucratic configuration. These two aspects are interrelated and together form an institutional framework that influences the course of policy implementation.

First, in terms of mechanism, the implementation of policies has generally been equipped with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or technical implementation guidelines that function as a reference for implementers in the field. The existence of this SOP is important to ensure that the actions of implementers remain within the policy corridor that has been set, and do not deviate from the objectives and target groups that have been formulated previously (Agus, 2011).

Second, related to the bureaucratic structure, the complexity of the organizational structure can be an obstacle in policy implementation. Bureaucracies that are too long, hierarchical, or fragmented tend to undermine the effectiveness of internal oversight. In addition, this condition also has the potential to give rise to complicated and convoluted administrative procedures, thereby reducing organizational flexibility and responsiveness in dealing with dynamics in the field. Therefore, the design of an adaptive, efficient, and integrated bureaucratic structure is an important requirement in ensuring the success of a policy.

WEST JAVA STOPAN PROGRAM IN REDUCING UNDERAGE MARRIAGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GEORGE EDWARD III

In the perspective of George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory, the initial success of the West Java STOPAN can be reviewed from four important aspects: (1) Communication between actors facilitated in the form of formal commitments; (2) Resources in the form of institutional support from vertical and horizontal institutions; (3) The disposition or attitude of the implementers as seen in the willingness of various institutions to sign commitments; and (4) Bureaucratic structures that have been regulated through regulations, although they are still in the process of strengthening through the Governor's Regulation or RAD (Regional Action Plan).

The implementation of the STOPAN Program in West Java is currently still in the institutional transition stage, which has not been fully supported by explicit and binding regional regulations. This causes the approach to implementing policies that still depend on technical interpretations of general regulations, as well as on circulars that do not have the equivalent legal force of PERDA or PERGUB. Therefore, DP3AKB encourages local governments to make special regulations in tackling child marriage. And there are several regencies/cities that have made PERDA related to this, such as in Cirebon Regency with Perbup Number 12 of 2021, Sumedang Regency with Perbup Number 84 of 2023, Tasikmalaya Regency with Perbup Number 153 of 2022, and Cianjur Regency with Perbup Number 10 of 2020, Garut Regency with Perbup Number 126 of 2021, Bogor Regency with Perbup Number 39 of 2021. In the future, hopefully every Regency/City Region will have all the Perbup regarding the prevention of underage marriage, in order to provide legal certainty and legality of the STOPAN program as a whole. Even in several villages in the Garut and Sukabumi areas, there are Village Regulations (Perdes) that regulate the prevention of child marriage.

This is strengthened by the statement of drh. Iin Indasari, M.P Head of PKK DP3KB West Java

"Actually, if the program itself is not there, we do not have a special legal basis. But the basis for our movement is, of course, the first law related to the amendment of Law number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage which became no. 16 of 2019 where the age of men, the future groom became 19 years old, changed from the previous 16 years for women. Then both also have regional regulations, we have West Java provincial regulation number 3 of 2021 concerning the implementation of child protection. And the derivative is also the governor's regulation number 13 of 2022, the implementation regulation of the PERDA."

This shows that the implementation of STOPAN in West Java is still an administrative initiative, not a legally binding policy. In fact, one of the main conditions for successful policy implementation according to George C. Edwards III is policy clarity and a strong legal command. The absence of a PERGUB or special PERDA regarding STOPAN results in the weak impetus of this program at the regional level.

This shows that policy implementers in West Java rely on an interpretive approach to general policies to fill specific regulatory gaps. In the framework of normative analysis, this can be considered as a form of interim policy response, but in the long term it still requires substantive regulation so that the program has adequate executive power. Data on the prevalence of child marriage in West Java in the last five years (2020–2024) shows a significant downward trend, even faster than the national average. In 2020, the child marriage rate in West Java was recorded at 11.96%, higher than the national rate of 10.35%. However, since then,

there has been a consistent decline every year. In 2021, it decreased to 10.09% in West Java, while nationally it fell to 9.23%. This trend will continue until 2024, where the prevalence of child marriage in West Java will drop to 5.78%, slightly lower than the national average recorded at 5.90%.

This decline can be interpreted as a result of policy interventions and child marriage *prevention* programs, including the STOPAN (Stop Child Marriage) Program. When viewed from the approach to public policy implementation, the George C. Edwards III model, this success shows that aspects of communication, cross-sector coordination, resource allocation, and bureaucratic commitment are relatively effective in the context of West Java. The consistent decline in prevalence over the past five years also indicates that efforts to socialize, educate, and strengthen regional regulations are beginning to have a real impact on changes in people's behavior, especially in postponing the marriage age of minors. However, the prevalence rate of 5.78% in 2024 remains a signal that challenges still exist, especially in areas with local wisdom that still practice child marriage culturally or economically.

In relation to communication, DP3AKB carried out the signing of a cross-sector joint commitment in an effort to succeed the West Java STOPAN program with Pentahelix elements. This was emphasized by the Chairman of DP3AKB dr. Siska Gerfianti, Sp. DLP., M.H.Kes

> *"The activity begins with increasing commitment together with vertical elements, then we will make further commitments in the following year to agencies at the provincial level that are indeed related to child marriage To jointly carry out this West Java Stopan Program"*

From a legal perspective, the signing of joint commitments between sectors within the scope of the West Java Provincial Government reflects the implementation of the principle of cross-sectoral coordination in public policy. In the context of regional autonomy, Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government mandates that government affairs related to basic services, including child protection, become the mandatory authority of local governments.

Furthermore, DP3AKB held counseling on the dangers that can be caused by underage marriage through social media campaigns or conducting direct counseling to high school teachers, religious counselors, and parents or vulnerable groups who can be prone to underage marriage. The Chairman of DP3AKB continued

> "*We are increasing the capacity of local Champions at the village level consisting of village officials, extension workers, teachers. patbm Task Force Cekas, PKK cadres, youth organizations, Penghulu, Scouts, student councils for regional children, genre forums, community organizations and youth organizations within the Village as well as DP3AKB field partners, motekar, family planning examples, West Java women's school facilitators"*

The increase in the capacity of local champions indicates a clear flow of communication from the provincial government to the village level. Through training, socialization, or empowerment provided to village actors, there is a process of dissemination of policy information in a structured manner.

In this context, communication is not only vertical from the central/regional government downwards, but also horizontal—because local champions come from different backgrounds and institutions, so coordination between them is important. The voluntary involvement of various elements of society (teachers, cadres, extension workers, children's forums, village organizations) shows a positive disposition towards the STOPAN policy. Local champions generally have a moral and social commitment to the issue of preventing child marriage because of their proximity to the community.

DP3AKB also intervened with village heads and village officials. This is because the village head is the closest actor to the community and is often the starting door for marriage dispensation applications. Some villages do have Village Regulations (Perdes) on the prevention of child marriage, although their implementation has not been optimal. Therefore, education that targets village heads and their apparatus is important so that it does not encourage child marriage, but becomes a pioneer in its prevention.

Iin Indasarai emphasized this

"We also educate village heads because the closest ones are usually to make dispensations, they usually report to their respective villages and some regions, actually there are village regulations, although the Perdes, this is still not effective, I think it is implemented."

DP3AKB develops family resilience programs through strengthening the role of Family Learning Centers (Puspaga), both at the provincial and district/city levels. Puspaga acts as a strategic education and counseling center in assisting parents and the community to be more prepared in raising children in a healthy manner, preventing the potential for child marriage from an early age. This education is not only targeted at families, but also massively carried out to actors in the field (field line), including cadres, religious extension workers, and community leaders.

Education is also provided intensively to Islamic religious extension workers in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This targets cultural reasons that are often the justification for people to marry minors, such as concerns about promiscuity or adultery. With this approach, religious messages are directed at fulfilling children's rights and postponing the age of marriage, in accordance with the provisions of sharia and state regulations. Efforts to increase the capacity of local champions at the village level in the West Java STOPAN program can be seen as a decentralized strategy for the implementation of child marriage prevention policies that are in line with George C. Edwards III's implementation theory, especially in terms of communication, resources, implementing disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

In the strategy of increasing the capacity of Local champions, DP3AKB made a module on the dangers of underage marriage, both in terms of reproductive health, or in terms of mental health. Drh. Iin Indasari, M.P Head of PKK continued.

"We also prepare guidelines or modules for increasing the capacity of local champions, which are the compilers of the modules. Some are from UPI, some are from IPB, some are from UIN, Sunan Gunung Jati, then there are from Unsil Lake, Siliwangi University.".

The statement describes the strategic collaboration between local governments, in this case the West Java Province Women's Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning Office (DP3AKB), and higher education institutions in the preparation of local capacity building modules. If analyzed using George C. Edwards III's theory of public policy implementation, this collaboration touches on four main variables, namely communication, resources, disposition (attitude), and bureaucratic structure.

First, from the communication aspect, the involvement of academics from UPI, IPB, UIN Sunan Gunung Jati, and Siliwangi University through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) strengthens the cross-sectoral policy communication process. This communication not only conveys the purpose of the policy, but also builds a vision understanding between technical implementers (DP3AKB) and policy thinkers (academics).

Second, in the *resource* dimension, this collaboration expands the capacity of policy resources, especially in terms of science, methodology, and community service experience

owned by higher education institutions. Modules prepared based on academic studies strengthen the quality of the substance and increase the chances of success when implemented in the field.

Third, in terms of *disposition*, or the attitude of the implementers towards the policy, the existence of the MoU shows a positive attitude and joint commitment between the government and universities to reduce the rate of child marriage. The lecturers and academics involved are not only technical drafters, but also agents of change who are committed to encouraging social transformation through public education.

Fourth, in the aspect *of bureaucratic structure*, cooperation with universities shows that policy implementation is not only in the realm of formal bureaucracy, but also involves knowledge structures and social networks. This creates a flexible yet strong implementing structure, as it is underpinned by academic legitimacy and intellectual capacity.

5. Conclusion

Child marriage is a multidimensional issue that has an impact on health, education, psychological, economic, and violations of children's basic rights. This phenomenon is still rampant in various regions of West Java with complex backgrounds, ranging from poverty factors, low education, permissive culture, to minimal religious understanding. To overcome this, the West Java Provincial Government through the STOPAN Program (Stop Child Marriage in West Java) has implemented a policy based on multi-sector synergy.

STOPAN West Java is a public policy-based initiative that has strong legitimacy, both normatively through the revision of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage, and strategically through the 2020–2030 Child Marriage Prevention Strategy. The program encourages cross-sectoral engagement, including government agencies, religious leaders, academics, educational institutions, civil society, media, and the business world.

The implementation of the STOPAN program shows partial effectiveness in reducing the rate of child marriage. This is shown by the decrease in the number of marriage dispensation applications in districts/cities in the West Java region. Based on data from the High Court of Religion of West Java Province, marriage dispensation in West Java Province tends to decrease during the STOPAN program, in 2021 there were 6,794 cases, in 2022 there were 5,523 cases, in 2023 there were 4599, and in 2024 there were 3,631. However, there are still many people who practice serial marriage. Index of the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who are married or living together before the age of 18 according to 2021-2024. In 2021 it amounted to 10.09%, in 2022 it amounted to 8.65%, in 2023 it amounted to 6.79, in 2024 it amounted to 5.78%. The child marriage index during the STOPAN program period in 2021-2024 experienced an average annual decrease of 1.45%.

Using George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, it can be concluded that the success of the STOPAN program is largely determined by four factors: policy communication, resources, implementing disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The STOPAN program shows a fairly good performance in terms of communication and resources, but is still weak in implementation consistency (implementing disposition) and is not optimal in the monitoring and evaluation structure at the local level.

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