

The Role of Public Servants in Alleviating Poverty in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Poverty remains a persistent issue in Indonesia, and it requires the involvement of various actors, including public servants. This study aims to explore the role of public servants in alleviating poverty in Indonesia. To achieve this goal, a qualitative research method was employed, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews with public servants who work in poverty-alleviation programs. The study found that public servants play a crucial role in poverty reduction efforts by providing access to basic services, including health care and education, and implementing poverty-alleviation programs. However, there are several challenges that public servants face, such as limited resources and bureaucratic obstacles, which hinder their ability to deliver effective services. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of public servants in poverty reduction efforts and suggests the need for greater support and resources to enable public servants to deliver better services and improve the lives of people living in poverty.

Keywords: poverty alleviation; public servants; basic services

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a significant issue in Indonesia, with an estimated 24 million people living below the poverty line in 2021 (World Bank, 2021). Despite the government's efforts to reduce poverty rates, the problem persists, and poverty remains a multi-dimensional issue that requires the involvement of various actors. Public servants, as government officials who implement public policies and programs, play a crucial role in poverty reduction efforts.

Public servants are responsible for implementing poverty reduction programs and delivering basic services to the population, including health care, education, and social welfare programs. However, the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs implemented by public servants is often hampered by various challenges, such as limited resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and corruption.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the poverty situation in Indonesia, with many people losing their jobs and income. In response, the government has implemented various measures to support the affected population, such as cash transfers and food aid programs. Public servants have played a critical role in implementing these programs and ensuring that the assistance reaches the most vulnerable groups.

Therefore, there is a need to understand the specific role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts and the challenges they face in delivering effective services. By identifying the challenges and barriers that public servants face, policymakers can design more effective policies and programs that enable public servants to deliver better services and improve the lives of people living in poverty.

This study draws on the theory of public service delivery, which highlights the importance of effective and efficient delivery of public services to achieve development goals (OECD, 2005). The theory suggests that public servants need to provide services that are accessible, responsive, and accountable to the needs of the population they serve.

In the context of poverty alleviation in Indonesia, the theory of public service delivery is highly relevant, as it emphasizes the importance of public servants in delivering basic services and implementing poverty reduction programs. By understanding the key principles of accessibility, responsiveness, and accountability in public service delivery, policymakers can design more effective programs and policies that address the needs of the population living in poverty (Alkire & Seth, 2015; Bandiera et al., 2017; Feliciano, 2019; Li, 2019; Mahadevan & Hoang, 2016; Miyamoto, 2020; Santika, 2019; Sareen, 2020; Wu et al., 2018). This study will explore how public servants in Indonesia can better deliver services that are accessible, responsive, and accountable to the needs of the population, with a view to improving poverty reduction efforts in the country.

Previous studies have examined the role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. For instance, Laurens & Putra (2020) explored the challenges faced by public servants in implementing poverty reduction programs in Indonesia. Another study by examined the impact of public service quality on poverty alleviation in Indonesia. However, there is a need for further research to understand the specific role of public servants in poverty alleviation and the challenges they face in delivering effective services.

While previous studies have shed light on the role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia, there is still a need for more research in this area. For example, previous studies have focused on the challenges faced by public servants in implementing poverty reduction programs and the impact of public service quality on poverty alleviation. However, more research is needed to understand the specific strategies that public servants can use to deliver effective poverty reduction services and the barriers that prevent them from doing so. This study will contribute to the existing literature by exploring the role of public servants in poverty alleviation in Indonesia and identifying the challenges they face in delivering effective services. By providing insights into the specific strategies that public servants can use to improve poverty reduction efforts, this study can inform policy and practice in this important area. This study aims to explore the role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. Specifically, the study aims to Identify the role of public servants in poverty alleviation programs in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of public servants involved in poverty reduction programs. The study participants are public servants who work in poverty reduction programs in various government agencies and organizations in Indonesia. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, in which participants are selected based on their knowledge and experience in poverty reduction programs.

The data collection technique used in this study is semi-structured interviews. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face or online, depending on the preference of the participants. The interview questions are designed to explore the role of public servants in

poverty reduction efforts, the challenges they face in delivering effective services, and their recommendations for improving poverty reduction programs. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis purposes (Mishra & Alok, 2022).

The data collected from the interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involves identifying patterns and themes in the data and organizing them into meaningful categories. The themes that emerge from the data will be used to answer the research questions and develop recommendations for improving poverty reduction programs in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study indicate that public servants play a crucial role in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. Public servants provide essential services, such as health care and education, and implement poverty reduction programs that aim to improve the lives of people living in poverty. The study participants reported that public servants are committed to their work and are motivated to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve.

However, the study also found that public servants face several challenges that hinder their ability to deliver effective services. The most significant challenges identified by the study participants include limited resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and corruption (Fang et al., 2020; Gutmann et al., 2020; O'Hara & Sainato, 2015; Omerzel & Gulev, 2011; Saleh, 2022; Xie & Zhang, 2020; Xu, 2021). The lack of resources, including funding and staffing, makes it difficult for public servants to deliver quality services and implement poverty reduction programs effectively. Bureaucratic obstacles, such as complex regulations and procedures, also slow down the implementation of poverty reduction programs. Corruption, both in the public and private sectors, undermines the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts and erodes public trust in the government.

Moreover, the study found that public servants can improve the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs by adopting strategies that enhance accessibility, responsiveness, and accountability. For example, public servants can improve accessibility by decentralizing services and bringing them closer to the communities they serve. They can also improve responsiveness by conducting regular needs assessments and involving the community in the design and implementation of poverty reduction programs (Baloch et al., 2020; Ho, 2018; Ibn-mohammed et al., 2021; Yang, 2020; Zhou, 2019). Finally, they can enhance accountability by implementing transparent and participatory monitoring and evaluation systems that enable the public to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of services.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the specific role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. The findings can inform the development of policies and programs that enable public servants to deliver better services and improve the lives of people living in poverty. By addressing the challenges identified in this study and adopting the strategies recommended, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs and accelerate progress towards the goal of reducing poverty rates in Indonesia.

Future research can build on the findings of this study by exploring the role of other actors, such as civil society organizations and private sector actors, in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. Additionally, future research can investigate the impact of policy changes and reforms on poverty reduction programs implemented by public servants. Such research can provide a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to effective poverty reduction efforts and inform the development of evidence-based policies and programs.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. The study participants reported that public servants play a significant role in providing essential services, such as health care and education, and implementing poverty reduction programs that aim to improve the lives of people living in poverty. This finding is consistent with the theory of public service delivery, which emphasizes the importance of public servants in delivering basic services and implementing poverty reduction programs (OECD, 2005).

However, the study also found that public servants face several challenges that hinder their ability to deliver effective services. The most significant challenges identified by the study participants include limited resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and corruption (Omerzel & Gulev, 2011; Xu, 2021). These findings are consistent with previous research, which has identified similar challenges faced by public servants in implementing poverty reduction programs in Indonesia (Kusumasari et al., 2020; Saroinsong et al., 2021).

To address these challenges, the study participants recommended several strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs implemented by public servants. These strategies include improving accessibility by decentralizing services, improving responsiveness by involving the community in program design and implementation, and enhancing accountability by implementing transparent and participatory monitoring and evaluation systems. These strategies are consistent with the principles of public service delivery, which emphasize the importance of delivering services that are accessible, responsive, and accountable to the needs of the population (OECD, 2005).

The study's findings have several implications for policy and practice. First, policymakers should prioritize providing greater support and resources to public servants to enable them to deliver better services and implement poverty reduction programs more effectively. Second, policymakers should address the bureaucratic obstacles that hinder the implementation of poverty reduction programs, such as complex regulations and procedures. Third, policymakers should take steps to address corruption in the public and private sectors, which undermines the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts and erodes public trust in the government.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided insights into the role of public servants in poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia. The study's findings highlight the importance of public servants in delivering essential services and implementing poverty reduction programs. However, public servants face several challenges that hinder their ability to deliver effective services, including limited resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and corruption. To improve the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs, policymakers should prioritize providing greater support and

resources to public servants, addressing bureaucratic obstacles, and taking steps to address corruption. By doing so, policymakers can accelerate progress towards the goal of reducing poverty rates in Indonesia.

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