



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Power Relations and Media Narratives in Implementation of the Smart Indonesia Program: A Case Study of Policy Perspective in Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: Nov 16, 2024

Accepted: Jan 1, 2025

Keywords

Power Relations
Media Narratives
Narrative Policy Framework
Three-Dimensional Power Theory
Public Policy Implementation
Educational Disparities
Inclusivity
Policy Legitimacy
Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the interplay of power relations and media narratives in the implementation of the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), a strategic initiative aimed at reducing educational disparities through financial assistance to underprivileged students. Using Lukes' three-dimensional power theory and the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), this study investigates how power dynamics among central and local governments, schools, and communities shape policy implementation and how media narratives influence public perceptions and program outcomes. The research focuses on Palembang City, South Sumatra, employing a qualitative approach that combines online media content analysis and in-depth interviews with local stakeholders. Findings reveal that media narratives often depict the government as a "hero" in addressing educational inequalities, while overlooking challenges such as administrative inefficiencies and local political influences. The open power dimension highlights government efforts to increase transparency, while hidden and structural power dimensions expose biases in beneficiary selection and limitations of uniform national policies in addressing regional needs. Media narratives play a dual role in reinforcing policy legitimacy and exposing gaps, thereby influencing public trust and participation. The study contributes to public policy literature by integrating power dynamics and narrative analysis, emphasizing the importance of balancing policy design with effective communication and localized implementation strategies. It concludes with practical recommendations for enhancing transparency, fostering balanced media reporting, and increasing policy flexibility to adapt to diverse regional contexts, ultimately improving the inclusivity and effectiveness of PIP.

INTRODUCTION

Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) is a strategic policy of the Indonesian government aimed at increasing the inclusiveness of national education. This program provides cash assistance through Smart Indonesia Card (KIP) to students from underprivileged families, facilitating to access education. Moreover, it is a significant step in supporting the global education agenda, particularly the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which ensures inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2021). As part of the national social policy agenda, PIP not only aims to reduce the dropout rate but also serves as an important tool in addressing educational disparities, specifically in remote areas (Kemdikbud, 2018).

Implementation of PIP at the regional level has faced significant challenges. Previous studies have shown that limited educational infrastructure, insufficient program socialization within communities, and cultural resistance hinder the distribution of benefits (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, complex bureaucracy and regional political dynamics often act as barriers to program's success. These complexities emphasize the need for a more comprehensive technique to understand how the dimensions of power influence implementation of program across different regions in Indonesia.

Power dimension plays a crucial role in implementation of public policy, including PIP. According to Lukes (2005), power can be understood in three dimensions, namely open, hidden, and structural (Lukes, 2006). These dimensions explain how influence and control are exercised by various actors, both directly and through norms and preferences formed within the society. In the context of PIP, power relations involve interactions between the central government, local governments, schools, and local communities, each playing a different role in determining program's success. Therefore, understanding these dimensions is essential for identifying factors that strengthen or weaken policy implementation.

The mass media plays a key role in constructing public policy narratives. Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) is a technique for policy analysis that emphasizes the role of narratives or stories in influencing public policy. Introduced by Michael D. Jones and Mark K. McBeth in 2010 through the seminal work published in *Policy Studies Journal*, NPF has continued to evolve since the early 2010s, with many additional studies adapting and expanding the framework. Consequently, it has become one of the most influential techniques in modern policy analysis (Jones & Mcbeth, 2010), (Shanahan et al., 2011).

In the context of PIP, media coverage not only emphasizes the success or failure of program but also serves as a tool to shape public opinion, which can either strengthen or weaken support for policy. Narratives constructed by media often reflect conflicts of interest among various policy actors and influence how the public perceives the effectiveness of program at the local level.

Investigations on the interaction between power relations and media narratives in implementation of education policies remain limited while other studies evaluated the success of PIP using quantitative indicators, such as the increase in the number of students and beneficiaries (Junius Lengkong et al., 2024). Both elements are closely related to influencing public perception and the sustainability of program. This gap in integrative studies creates an opportunity for deeper academic understanding of the complex dynamics in implementation of PIP, particularly at the local level (Dimmera & Purnasari, 2020).

Based on the above description, this study analyzed the interaction between the dimensions of power and media narratives in implementation of PIP, focusing on case studies in Palembang City. Using the theoretical framework of the three dimensions of power (Lukes, 2006) and NPF (Shanahan et al., 2018), this study was expected to provide a holistic perspective on how policy actors used power at various levels and how media narratives influenced policy implementation in the field. It also contributed to public policy literature by offering an integrative technique that connects the analysis of power and media narratives. Therefore, the results could provide strategic input for policymakers to improve the effectiveness of PIP through a more contextual and inclusive technique (Steven Lukes, 2005).

This study started with a literature review discussing the theory of power and media narratives in policy implementation. This was followed by the methodology section, which outlined the method used for data collection and analysis. The results and discussion section presented the main results based on field data analysis, while the concluding section summarized the results and provided practical recommendations for future PIP implementation. Therefore, the results are expected to contribute significantly to the development of more evidence-based public policies in Indonesia.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Three Dimensional Theory of Power

The Lukes' three-dimensional power theory provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding power relations in public policy. The first dimension, overt power, refers to directly visible decision-making, where policy actors compete to influence policy outcomes. The second dimension, hidden power, involves the control of certain actors who set the agenda, thereby allowing specific issues to be excluded from the decision-making process. The third dimension, structural power, explains how norms, preferences, and social structures shape actors' choices and behaviors without direct intervention. The three dimensions interact in policy implementation process, including the distribution of PIP benefits (Haugaard, 2008), (Dimmera & Purnasari, 2020). In the context of education policy, these dimensions of power can influence resource allocation, benefit distribution, and public perception of policies (Avelino, 2021), (Steven Lukes, 2005).

NPF

NPF is policy analysis technique that emphasizes the role of narratives (stories) in influencing public policy. This framework was first introduced by Michael D. Jones and Mark K. McBeth in 2010 through a seminal work published in *Policy Studies Journal*. Jones and McBeth affirmed that narratives played a critical role in shaping public perceptions, policy actors, and decision-making and also developed NPF as a systematic framework for understanding how stories were used to drive public policy. The framework focuses on narrative structure (characters, plot, story morals) and narrative content (beliefs, strategies) to explain how narratives shape policy preferences and actions (Jones & Radaelli, 2015), (Jones & McBeth, 2020).

According to NPF, public policy can be understood as narrative battle involving characters (protagonists and antagonists), storylines (plots), contexts (settings), and morals (values) (Kurniawan et al., 2022). Positive narratives can strengthen public support for policies, while negative narratives tend to create resistance. In the context of PIP, media plays an important role in conveying narratives that can shape public perceptions of program's success or failure. Therefore, using NPF as an analytical tool enables experts to explore how these narratives reflect conflicts of interest among policy actors (Chang & Koebele, 2020), (Shanahan et al., 2011).

Interaction of Power Theory and Policy Narratives

The combination of the three-dimensional theory of power and NPF provides a comprehensive technique to understanding the dynamics of public policy. Power not only directly influences policy implementation process but also shapes narrative that dominates the public space. For example, actors who have access to media can control narrative, which can influence public preferences and change the dynamics of power in policy implementation. Empirical studies show that media narratives often reflect power relations between government actors, communities, and other interest groups. This is particularly relevant to PIP analysis, where power of local policy actors and media narratives interact in determining the success of program (Shanahan et al., 2011), (Urfan & Setyawan, 2023).

Media Narratives in Education Policy

Investigations have been conducted on media narratives in education policy in various developing countries. Media framing significantly influences public perception of inclusive education programs (Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy, Jr, 2008). Media plays a crucial role in emphasizing issues such as the transparency of education fund distribution or challenges related to school infrastructure. This was supported by Jenkins (2020), examining how media narratives in Kenya influenced implementation of free education policies. However, in Indonesia, investigations on the role of media narratives in education policies, including PIP, remain limited. This presents an opportunity to explore the relationship between

media narratives and implementation of education policies in the local context (Jenkins & Gaventa, 1982), (Urfan & Setyawan, 2023).

Power in Policy Implementation

Power is a key focus of investigations on various education policies. Structural power influences the allocation of education resources, where certain actors control access to information and the distribution of funds (Buse et al., 2016). Hidden power, such as the influence of local elites, can lead to injustice in implementation of education policies (Salsabilah & Putri, 2022). In the Indonesian context, investigations on power relations in implementation of PIP have not been widely discussed, despite the significant role of local actors, such as local governments and schools, in determining the distribution of program benefits.

Gaps and Relevance of the Study

Studies integrating the two techniques remain limited, specifically in the context of education policy in Indonesia although the current study provides important insights into power theory and policy narratives. Most studies focused on quantitative evaluations, such as the number of program beneficiaries or school participation rates, without considering the dynamics of power and media narratives that influence policy implementation at the local level. Therefore, the current study aimed to fill this gap by examining the interaction between dimensions of power and media narratives in implementation of PIP in Palembang, South Sumatra. It is not only relevant for academics but also provides strategic input for policymakers to improve program effectiveness through a more inclusive and evidence-based technique (Caniago et al., 2021), (Tjahyo Rawinarno, Suhud Alynudin, Agus Widiarto, Haryo Setyoko, Najwa Shafira, 2024).

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used two main data collection methods, namely online media content analysis and in-depth interviews. First, content analysis was conducted on five leading online news portals in Indonesia, namely Kompas.com, Detik.com, Tribunnews.com, Kumparan.com, and Okezone.com. The selection of these media was based on the wide readership and frequency of reporting related to implementation of PIP. Data from these media were analyzed to identify dominant narratives, including issues, figures, and main messages raised in the news. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with regional policy actors, including local government officials, school educators, and Palembang City residents. These interviews aimed to explore in-depth perspectives on how power and interests were distributed in implementation of PIP program at the regional level (Purba, 2023).

Palembang City, South Sumatra, was chosen as the focus of the case study due to its complex education policy dynamics and distinctive urban challenges. In addition, the city involves various actors in implementation of PIP and serves as a representative example of interaction patterns between government, schools, and communities. This case study facilitated an in-depth exploration of how media narratives related to PIP interacted with on-the-ground realities, including power relations influencing policy implementation.

This study integrated NPF and the three-dimensional power theory as the primary analytical framework. NPF was used to understand how media narratives influence public perceptions of PIP. These narratives were analyzed through the dimensions of narrative structure (characters, conflicts, resolutions) and themes (moral of the story, values promoted). Meanwhile, the three-dimensional power theory, which includes open, hidden, and structural power, was used to explore the dynamics of power relations in program implementation. The integration of both frameworks helped connect media narratives with power that influenced policy decision-making (Stone, 2024).

Data obtained from media and interviews were analyzed using a qualitative coding through three stages,

namely open, axial, and selective coding. Open coding was used to identify initial themes from raw data, while axial coding connected the themes into larger categories. Finally, selective coding was carried out to formulate the main narrative and relationships between variables. This process was supported by qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo, to increase accuracy and transparency (Rifa'i, 2023).

Source triangulation techniques were used to ensure the validity of the data by comparing data from media analysis with the results of in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the reliability was strengthened through peer debriefing, which included discussions with experts to review the results of coding and data interpretation. This was conducted to minimize bias in interpreting results and ensure consistency in the analysis (Egon G. Guba, 1994).

This study had limitations despite using a comprehensive analysis technique. The geographical focus was limited to Palembang City, hence the results could not be generalized nationally. Access to certain key informants could also affect the representation of interview data. Therefore, further studies with wider geographic coverage and a focus on different actor groups were needed to strengthen the results.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Media Narratives and Elements of NPF

This study showed that media narratives related to PIP implementation consistently used the elements outlined in NPF, namely the characters, settings, plots, and morals of the story. The main characters showed in media coverage portrayed the government as the "hero", an actor leading efforts to improve educational equality through inclusive policies. In this narrative, students from underprivileged families are showed as "victims" who should be saved from the trap of poverty through educational assistance. This framing strengthens the legitimacy of the government as a solution provider to education problems in Indonesia. However, narrative often ignores the role of other actors, such as local governments and schools, which actually have a significant influence on program implementation (Stack & Boler, 2007), (Peterson et al., 2020).

The following table presents the analysis of media narratives related to PIP implementation based on NPF elements and power relations:

Table 1. Media Narratives Related to PIP Implementation Based on NPF Elements and Power Relations

Elements of Analysis	Description of Results	Source
Character	- The government is portrayed as a "hero" trying to achieve equal education. - Underprivileged students are "victims" who need help to continue their education.	Shanahan et al. (2018)
Setting	- Geographical challenges, such as remote locations and limited educational infrastructure. - Administrative complexities, specifically in verifying beneficiary data.	World Bank (2019); Jenkins (2020)
Plot	- Media emphasizes success stories of aid distribution in several areas. - Local administrative and bureaucratic conflicts often emerge as main challenges.	Kompas (2022); Setiawan & Nugroho (2020)
Moral of the Story	- The importance of educational equality to reduce social inequality. - Education is considered a long-term investment for social mobility.	UNESCO (2021); Stone (2012)

Open Power Dimension	- Media acts as a supervisor of program implementation by reporting on the government's achievements and failures in implementing policies.	Lukes (2005); Fischer & Forester (1993)
Hidden Dimensions of Power	- Media narratives often reinforce the positions of dominant actors, such as the central government, and tend to ignore criticism of local power dynamics.	Goddard et al. (2021); Jenkins (2020)
Dimensions of Structural Power	- Public norms and perceptions shape the notion that beneficiaries are the "lucky ones," creating a bias toward aid distribution.	Gaventa (1980); Torres & Schugurensky (2018)

4.2 Geographical and Administrative Challenges in Media Narratives

In media coverage, the setting and plot often focus on the geographical and administrative challenges that hinder implementation of PIP. For example, media emphasizes the problem of limited educational infrastructure in remote areas, such as poor road access and minimal school facilities. Furthermore, the process of verifying beneficiary data is a significant challenge in ensuring that KIP assistance is on target. This plot shows the complexity of implementing education policies faced by the government, specifically in areas with diverse socio-economic conditions. As supported by previous studies, administrative barriers are often the challenge in conditional cash transfer programs in developing countries (Merry, 2016), (Shanahan et al., 2019).

4.3 Moral Message: Educational Equality as a Priority

Media narratives consistently focus on the moral of the story regarding the importance of equalizing education as a strategic step to reduce socioeconomic disparities in Indonesia. This moral message shows inclusive education is key to promoting social mobility and achieving national development objectives. In some cases, media praises the government's initiative to channel aid digitally through KIP, while still criticizing its implementation which is considered slow or uneven. This moral message not only reflects the government's vision but also influences public perception of PIP program, where beneficiaries are often considered "lucky" due to access to rare educational assistance (Merry, 2016).

4.4 Media Narratives and Dimensions of Power

The interaction between media narratives and power is significant in the dimensions of power that influence PIP implementation. In the open power dimension, media plays a transparent role as a supervisor of policy implementation by emphasizing the government's success or failure in managing program. In the hidden power dimension, media often reinforces certain narratives that benefit dominant actors, such as the central government, by ignoring the role or criticism of local actors. On the other hand, the structural power dimension is seen in how social norms and dominant narratives shape public perceptions of those who deserve PIP assistance, creating bias in society's perception of beneficiaries (Steven Lukes, 2005), (Dowding, 2006), (Agussalim Dafri, 1998).

4.5 Media Narrative Barriers and Gaps

There are gaps in reporting that focus on government achievements even though media narratives have contributed to raising public awareness of PIP program. Many media outlets do not address more critical issues, such as how the data verification process is carried out or how the distribution of benefits is affected by local political dynamics. Furthermore, reporting often ignores the direct experiences of beneficiaries, which could provide a more holistic picture of program's impact at the household level. This lack of representation shows media narratives still have limitations in showing the complexity of PIP implementation in the field (Anderson, 2007).

4.6 Policy Implications of Media Narrative Results

The results have several important policy implications. First, the government needs to increase collaboration with media to ensure a more balanced and inclusive narrative. Rather than simply emphasizing successes, media should also act as a channel to voice the challenges faced by local actors and beneficiaries. Second, a more transparent narrative about the PIP distribution mechanism can help build public trust in program. Third, the government should encourage media to act as a liaison between communities and policymakers, hence public input can inform program implementation. By integrating analysis of media narratives and power relations, the government can identify more specific and contextual areas for improvement.

The following is a table of results from media related to the PIP from 2019 to 2024 based on analysis from several trusted sources.

Table 2. Summary of Media Coverage on PIP Implementation (2019–2024)

No.	Media	Year	Key Results	Source
1	Kompas.com	2024	The amount of PIP assistance increased to IDR 1.8 million per year for senior high school/vocational high school students. Students in grades XII and X only received IDR 900,000.	Kompas.com
2	Okezone.com	2024	The 2024 PIP fund disbursement schedule was divided into three stages, namely February-April, May-September, October-December.	Okezone.com
3	Kompas.com	2024	The PIP receipt status could be checked on pip.kemdikbud.go.id page using NISN and NIK.	Kompas.com
4	Kompas.com	2024	The fund disbursement process was carried out through distributing banks such as BNI, BSI, and BRI by providing documents such as savings books or debit cards.	Kompas.com
5	Tribunnews.com	2024	PIP recipients included KIP holders, poor/vulnerable families, PKH recipients, orphans, or those affected by natural disasters.	Kompas.com
6	Detik.com	2019-2024	Media emphasized the delay in the disbursement of PIP funds in several areas and the importance of more accurate data verification to ensure targeted distribution.	Detik.com
7	Kumparan.com	2020	The focus of the news was on the success of PIP in reducing school dropout rates in several rural areas despite infrastructure and accessibility constraints.	Kumparan.com

4.2 Dimensions of Power in PIP Implementation

Open Power: Transparency and Technical Constraints

In the open power dimension, the government has made significant efforts to increase transparency in the allocation and distribution of PIP funds. This is achieved through the development of digital systems, such as the official PIP portal (pip.kemdikbud.go.id), helping beneficiaries and the public to monitor the status of fund disbursement directly. The government also routinely publishes reports on the number of recipients and the total budget distributed. Despite these commendable efforts, there are still technical challenges hindering implementation of policy. Several regions have reported delays in fund disbursement due to data mismatches between the central system and the school level, as well as the

lack of technological infrastructure in remote areas. This situation shows transparency in open power still needs to be improved in the technical aspects of implementation.

Hidden Power: The Influence of Local Actors

The hidden power dimension is seen in the role of local actors, such as school principals, village officials, and community leaders, who often influence PIP assistance distribution process based on preferences or interests. In some cases, school principals have a significant influence in determining which students are eligible to receive benefits, specifically in areas where data verification process is less strict. Furthermore, some community leaders can use this program as a tool to strengthen social or political position by prioritizing certain families as beneficiaries. This raises the risk of biased distribution contrasting with the principle of inclusivity and can cause dissatisfaction among beneficiary communities.

Structural Power: The Limits of National Policy

In the structural power dimension, limitations set by national policies are the main challenges to implementing PIP at the regional level. National policies are designed to provide uniform general guidelines but are often less flexible in adapting to specific regional needs. For example, in remote areas with difficult access to schools, the need for supporting facilities such as transportation is not accommodated in PIP policy, which focuses on direct cash assistance. The rigidity of policy also makes it difficult for regional actors to innovate in implementing programs that are more in line with the demographic and geographic characteristics of the regions. Consequently, the effectiveness of program is limited and tends to be uneven across regions.

Implications of Power on the Success of PIP Implementation

The interaction between the three dimensions of power shows the complexity of PIP implementation. Government efforts to increase transparency (open power) are often offset by the influence of local actors (hidden power) that can affect the distribution of benefits. Structural power in the form of uniform national policies also poses challenges in adjusting programs to specific regional needs. Therefore, the success of PIP implementation depends not only on central policies but also on the ability of local actors to manage programs with a more inclusive and adaptive technique. There needs to be harmonization between national policies and regional implementation to ensure program objectives are achieved effectively and evenly.

The following is a table summarizing media results regarding the dimensions of power in implementation of PIP based on the categories of open, hidden, and structural power.

Table 3. Dimensions of Power in PIP Implementation

Power Dimension Category	Key Results	Media Source
Open Power	- The government increased transparency through the official PIP portal to check the status of disbursement and the amount of assistance.	Kompas.com
	- Delays in disbursement of funds were reported in several regions due to inconsistencies in beneficiary data.	Detik.com
	- Annual beneficiary report provided by the Ministry of Education to improve accountability.	Okezone.com

Hidden Power	- School principals had a significant influence in determining which students received aid, specifically in areas with weak verification processes.	Tribunnews.com
	- Local community leaders often prioritized recipients based on social or political connections, creating bias in aid distribution.	Kompas.com
	- Media narratives tended to ignore criticism of the role of local actors, focusing on the success of program at the national level.	Kumparan.com
Structural Power	- Uniform national policies were not significantly flexible to accommodate specific needs in remote areas.	Detik.com
	- Lack of support for non-monetary aspects such as transportation for students in remote areas rarely addressed in policies.	Kompas.com
	- Policy structures limited innovation by local actors in developing more contextual implementation techniques.	Tribunnews.com

4.3 Interaction of Power and Media Narrative

Impact on Public Perception: Strengthening or Challenging Policy Legitimacy

Media narratives play an important role in shaping public perceptions of the legitimacy of PIP policy. When narrative conveyed by media shows the government's success, such as the distribution of funds that are right on target and an increase in the number of beneficiaries, the legitimacy of policy tends to increase. Media acts as a communication bridge between the government and the public, strengthening the belief that policy contributes to reducing educational disparities. However, media narratives can challenge the legitimacy of policy when the news emphasizes weaknesses, such as delays in the disbursement of funds or bias in the distribution of aid due to the influence of local actors. Narratives that emphasize hidden powers, such as the influence of school principals or community leaders, often create public distrust of the fairness of policy implementation (Santos et al., 2022).

The Effect of Narrative on Public Support and Participation

Positive media narratives can increase public participation in supporting PIP policy, specifically by inviting the public to actively monitor the distribution of aid in the respective regions. Conversely, negative narratives that show inconsistencies in beneficiary data or allegations of manipulation by local actors can create public resistance to policy. This can be seen in several news reports questioning the verification process for PIP recipients, where the public perceives the selection mechanism as not transparent. Narrative can also reduce the effectiveness of policy because the public loses trust in program's inclusive objectives. Therefore, media has power to either support or criticize public acceptance and participation in policy (Caniago et al., 2021).

The Effect of Power Interaction on Policy Effectiveness

The gap between the data presented in media narrative and the reality in the field is one of the factors affecting the effectiveness of PIP policy. In the open power dimension, the government often emphasizes the high number of beneficiaries as an indicator of success, while media supports this narrative by showing the positive impacts of policy in several regions (Agussalim Dafri, 1998). However, the interaction of hidden power by local actors often creates challenges in implementation, such as manipulation of beneficiary data or the use of programs for certain socio-political interests. When media shows these challenges, such as delays in the disbursement of funds or uneven distribution of funds, narrative reflects implementation challenges capable of reducing policy achievements in the long term (Fatih et al., 2023).

Recommendations for Harmonizing Power and Media Narrative

The interaction between power and media narratives shows the need for a more harmonious technique between the government, media, and society in supporting the success of PIP. The government is expected to strengthen transparency by providing accurate and real-time data related to program implementation. Furthermore, media narratives should reflect the reality in the field in a balanced way, by providing space for community voices and beneficiary experiences. Efforts to address the influence of hidden power at the local level also need to be carried out through stricter supervision of the selection and distribution process of aid. Therefore, the synergy between positive media narratives and power transparency can increase the effectiveness of PIP in achieving its inclusive objectives (Salsabilah & Putri, 2022).

The following is a table of results from media regarding the interaction of power and media narratives in implementation of PIP:

Table 4. Interaction of Power and Media Narratives in PIP Implementation

Dimensions/Categories	Key Results	Media Source
Impact on Public Perception	- Media carried narratives of the government's success in distributing PIP as an effort to reduce educational disparities. - Negative narratives criticized the delay in disbursing PIP funds in several regions.	Detik.com Kompas.com
Effect on Public Support	- Positive narratives increased communities' participation in supporting program. - Media criticism of the recipient verification process reduced public trust in the fairness of aid distribution.	Tribunnews.com Kumparan.com
Effect on Policy Effectiveness	- Media narratives about the number of beneficiaries increased the perception of program's success nationally. - Media spotlight on local barriers, such as data manipulation, exposed implementation challenges at the local level.	Kompas.com Detik.com
Media Narrative Recommendations	- The government was asked to increase transparency in the distribution and verification of beneficiary data. - Media should provide a more balanced narrative between successes and challenges in the field.	Kompas.com Tribunnews.com

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this study showed how power relations and media narratives complexly affected public perceptions and the effectiveness of PIP implementation. The overt power dimension was seen in the government's efforts to increase transparency through digital systems, while hidden power was identified in the influence of local actors such as school principals or community leaders in distributing aid. Conversely, structural power showed how uniform national policies limited flexibility at the local level, reducing program's ability to adapt to specific regional needs. Media narratives played a role in shaping public perceptions, both strengthening policy's legitimacy by emphasizing successes and addressing its effectiveness by exposing challenges in the field. This complexity showed the success of PIP depended not only on policy design but also the interplay of power and public communication.

The integration of NPF with the three-dimensional power theory provided a significant theoretical contribution to public policy analysis. NPF facilitated the analysis of narratives used by media and policy actors to influence public perceptions, while power theory provided a framework for understanding the impact of policy actors at different levels. This technique enriched policy literature by integrating the

political, social, and communication dimensions of public policy implementation. Based on analysis, public policy was not only about the distribution of resources but also about the management of narratives to provide support and legitimacy at the local and national levels. This integrative perspective was relevant not only for the analysis of PIP but also for other policies involving multiple actors and levels of implementation.

The results had several practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders. First, the government needed to strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms by improving the process of verifying beneficiary data, specifically in areas with limited access to infrastructure. Second, media should be empowered to convey a more balanced narrative, emphasizing both policy successes and challenges, while also providing space for the voices of communities and local actors. Third, the flexibility of national policies should be increased to accommodate the needs of specific regions, including support for non-monetary aspects such as transportation or supporting infrastructure. Therefore, by integrating media power and narrative analysis into policy design and implementation, PIP could be more effective in achieving the objectives of inclusivity and reducing education disparities in Indonesia.

Strategic steps were recommended to emphasize transparency and accountability and to improve the effectiveness of PIP implementation. The government could use the role of media as an independent supervisor in monitoring the distribution of funds and ensuring that information related to PIP was openly available. The provision of real-time data through an official portal, regular public reporting, and technology-based complaint mechanisms was expected to strengthen public trust in this program. Furthermore, active community involvement, particularly through parent groups or local organizations, could provide relevant feedback on implementation process. This step not only increased the fairness of aid distribution but also reduced the risk of data manipulation or abuse of authority by local actors.

National policies should be designed with greater flexibility to accommodate the needs of specific regions. Furthermore, the central government was expected to encourage more intensive collaboration with local governments and schools to tailor implementation of PIP to the geographic, social, and economic characteristics of each region. For example, remote areas with accessibility challenges could receive additional allocations to support students transportation or educational infrastructure development. However, this needs-based technique required increasing the capacity of local governments to design more contextual programs. With effective coordination between the central and local governments, as well as cross-sector collaboration involving communities, PIP could be more adaptive and have a significant impact in reducing educational disparities across Indonesia.

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