

# ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL HEAD LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN SIJUNJUNG REGENCY, WEST SUMATRA PROVINCE

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the leadership of regional heads in holistic community empowerment through two different points of view: the government as a subject and the community as an object to be empowered. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis to measure the leadership of the regional head of Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatra Province, in community empowerment. Primary data collection in this study was through focus group discussions (FGD), and open questionnaires with research objects, including low-income families in target households (RTS) empowered in 8 sub-districts and 61 villages. In addition, the researcher collected data through interviews, observations, and documentation with a total of 40 informants, including the Regent and Deputy Regent of Sijunjung, the Chairman of the DPRD, Regional Secretariat, DPRD Secretariat, 25 Regional Apparatus Organizations, eight sub-districts, Religious Leaders and parties involved with one representative each. The results showed that the government, as one of the implementing stakeholders of empowerment for the community, often does not have a solid commitment to the empowerment process. Meanwhile, in the community, researchers found that there are still people who are not empowered because of the atmosphere or climate that allows the potential of the community not to develop, the weak potential or power possessed by the community, and the occurrence of unbalanced competition in society. Thus, from the government's point of view, through the dimensions of vision, discipline, passion, and conscience, the Leadership of the Regional Head is good enough. Furthermore, from the perspective of the community through the dimensions of motivation, responsibility, way of working, contribution, and goals, it is concluded that the process of community empowerment in the government system is getting better through various government programs.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Community Empowerment, Local Government

## INTRODUCTION

The leadership of Regional Head ideally positions himself as a regional head, but more than that is to empower the community and find solutions to the obstacles that come (Rao 2013). It is because community development is inseparable from national development. Several national issues related to community empowerment have been debated, such as poverty, inequality, dependence, powerlessness, and backwardness, which have different contexts of time and space. (Banerjee et al. 2017). In overcoming these problems, the figure of the regional head leader plays a crucial role in improving the quality of human resources and natural resources at all levels and cultures of society (Johnson 2015).

A national driving force is significant in competing, namely, efforts made by all

government departments and all levels of society to run sustainably (Sulasmai, Issues, and 2020 n.d.). Society only moves when there is a driving force behind it, and this thrust is called *achievement motivation*, which is the driving force for human movement (Prodjosapoetro 1978). The success of governance and development depends on Efforts to improve the quality of human resources in Indonesia are not scientific and, from an internal or cultural point of view, are still neglected (Haji Makmur 2007).

The leadership of regional heads in community empowerment often prioritizes economic aspects over social aspects and fails to implement implementation strategies related to poverty reduction (Salifu and Kufoalor 2022). It happens in several regions in Indonesia, one of which is Sijunjung Regency in West Sumatra Province. Sijunjung Regency is an economical, agricultural, industrial, and social centre, a special attraction for residents around and outside Sijunjung Regency. People are competing to participate in pitting the fate of improving the standard of living so that the number of low-income families in target households is increasing (Badan Pusat Statistik 2020). It is a reasonably complex problem for the Sijunjung Regency Regional Government to overcome. Some efforts to overcome the number of low-income families have not been successful due to program implementation errors and do not touch on fundamental things (Salifu and Kufoalor 2022). In addition, people remain poor because they cannot voice their interests and use knowledge to escape poverty (Friedmann 1992).

The government has made various assistance programs for community empowerment that can contribute to poverty reduction (Fuseini, Enu-Kwesi, and Sulemana 2019; Laverack 2001). As well Sijunjung Regency with several poverty reduction programs such as the Kredit Usaha Tani (KUT), Regional Development Program (PPW), Integrated Area Development (PKT), Inpres Desa Tertinggal (IDT), Social Security Network (JPS), and the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) programs. Community empowerment program approaches to low-income families in target households are relatively different. The approach of low-income families to target households is essentially providing opportunities to the community to improve the living conditions of beneficiaries (Fuseini, Enu-Kwesi, and Sulemana 2019).

The sustainability of community empowerment through a program has been implemented within the leadership framework as a social symptom. Researchers understand that the process is the correct working step, not a series of speculations. Leaders redesign work, build teams, make assessments, coaching, guidance, personality inventory, work planning, task load, project groups, organizational analysis, and design (Laverack 2006; Clark, Southern, and Beer 2007). In this case, empowerment is described mainly as a style of change by the leaders, in this case, the Sijunjung Regency Local Government apparatus. It leads to increased delegation, communication, and employee responsibility as leaders relinquish power (Juhana et al. 2020).

In some situations, leaders have structural constraints and tenuous relationships with lower employees or leaders and interact less with the community so that assistance programs do not run effectively (Crawford 2008). In a study by Salifu and Kufoalor, leaders are more reactionary than proactive, so leaders are passive in implementing assistance programs in the community. It suggests that the interaction between the public and officials is relatively low, thus limiting beneficiaries' effective use of grant

funds (Salifu and Kufoalor 2022). Furthermore, Antonakis and Atwater's research explains leader distance. The study's results stated that distance affects a leader's legitimacy and how space affects the leader's results. Understanding the distance between the leader and society is integral to deciphering the dynamics of the process of influencing leadership (Antonakis and Atwater 2002).

However, changing management styles is an important part of the empowerment process in organizations. Contextual factors that influence one of them are environmental risks and the level of the leader hierarchy (Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam 2003). Furthermore, the assistance program is one of the strategies conveyed by Hickey and Bukenya. The results of his research explain that assistance programs, especially cash transfers, will be effective if they use a political approach. Other studies that align with this view include: (Friedmann 1992; Adamson and Bromiley 2013; Adamson 2010; Zakrzewska et al. 2017; Tauzer et al. 2019; Nayak and Panigrahi 2020). Thus, this approach will achieve harmony between aid programs and political settlements. Aid programs are strategies and measures that can significantly reduce poverty levels (Hickey and Bukenya 2021). The study is also in line with (Muluk and Nashihah 2021), which explains that the government can make specific strategies and focus on empowering communities to alleviate poverty. Some studies also provide the view that the process of empowerment is not only through a political approach but can use a holistic approach. Parker conveyed that it is necessary to provide holistic services based on society so that economic, social, and political progress can run sustainably (Peter Dreier 1996). This approach is also in line with several studies (Wang and Crosby 2019; C. Nyawo 2019; Anggara Wisesa 2017).

Real empowerment and sustainability occur when an organization changes its culture to release barriers to empowerment and if everyone is allowed and encouraged to develop community talents and reach society's potential (Muddassar Khan, Mohamed Rasli, and Bahru 2015). The achievement of this goal demands a rethinking and fundamental change to the use of the organization. Empowerment is not a simple change in management style but a critical driving force for democratization and recasting organizational values in treating employees (Welzel and Inglehart 2008). This framework is a process that leads to the development of an empowered society, both individually and collectively, and supported by good governance (Parker 2005).

This study aims to provide a holistic explanation and analysis of several dimensions in the community empowerment process from two points of view: the government and the community as objects in community empowerment. The researcher will combine the corner of the field in analyzing the leadership in Sijunjung Regency so that it can carry out the community empowerment process smoothly until it reaches a point on community welfare. This research is important in the framework of leadership education for the broader community because of the symptoms of errors in conceptualizing and attracting achievement parameters to realize civil society.

## **METHODS**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. The researcher collects primary data through focus group discussions (FGD) and administers an open questionnaire with the research object being low-income families in empowered target households. The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. Primary data was collected through

focus group discussions and open questionnaires with research objects, including low-income families in 8 sub-districts and 61 villages in empowered target households. In addition, researchers collected data through interviews, observations, and documentation with a total of 40 informants, including the Regent and Deputy Regent of Sijunjung, Chair of the DPRD, Regional Secretariat, DPRD Secretariat, 25 Regional Apparatus Organizations, eight sub-districts, Religious Leaders and parties involved with one representative each.

Furthermore, this study seeks to find data intersections both in terms of through the dimensions of motivation, responsibility, way of working, contribution, and goals (Clutterbuck 2010) and in terms of regional leaders through the dimensions of vision, discipline, passion, and conscience (Covey 2005). Thus, this research will prepare substantive theories based on data (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Not only primary data but this research also uses secondary data in the form of official documents, documentation, and official news media, as well as related scientific literature. The approach of testing the validity of data in this study was carried out with triangulation techniques, namely checking, re-checking, and cross-checking the data obtained, theory, methodology, and knowledge from the researchers.

## **RESULTS**

### **Leadership Aspects of Regional Heads**

#### **Vision**

Effective local leadership always has a results-oriented plan. The leadership of the Regional Head makes the vision needed and reachable. The vision is communicated to his followers and influences them to get support and be implemented together by utilizing all the resources and energy they have to realize the vision. With this vision, the Regional Head Leadership can effectively change the situation and achieve the desired goals. The essence of the Regional Head Leadership has a clear vision of where his followers are directed (Wirawan 2002). The distribution of questionnaires given to target households shows that the community has not felt the impact of realizing the vision to prosper and advance the community.

In the desire to prosper and advance society that is attached to the soul of every leader, a clear and correct vision is related to improving the welfare of the community to generate commitment and motivate the community. In addition, the vision must be effective, and the process of making the vision at least involves the community through dialogue, communication, motivation, coordination, and so on. Thus, the resulting vision has broad support from the community (Safaria 2004). The results of the processed data show that the leadership of the Regional Head in Sijunjung Regency does not have a distant view in the sense that he does not fully have a vision in carrying out his functions and duties as a community organizer. The leadership of the Regional Head should have a distant view of their community's future so that it can achieve goals together. It is a fundamental aspect to be known, understood, and lived by a leader. In addition, mastery of leadership knowledge is an absolute burden for a Regional Head.

#### **Discipline**

Discipline is key to a successful leader. That is, the leadership of a successful Regional Head always carries out positive habits and is carried out with regular and strict discipline. Discipline is practiced individually and by the organization as a whole. Discipline and vision are closely related. The questionnaire distribution results show that the leadership discipline of the Regional Head in Sijunjung Regency was not fully good. The leadership of the Regional Head in Sijunjung Regency has complied with the rules and laws in force, but the practice of discipline is not entirely at all levels. The leadership of the Regional Head of Sijunjung Regency has tried consistently to have a distant view of the future of its people, as is said with his behavior or actions in carrying out functions and duties in applying discipline. The essence of the discipline itself is consistent execution and turning it into something easy to predict, teach, and spread. If a team, unit, or organization practices this, they will demonstrate a more extraordinary ability to implement community empowerment as a top priority. Regional Heads in Sijunjung Regency have enough positive habits to set an example for their subordinates in carrying out their functions and duties as policy implementers.

### **Passion**

The desire and strength that grows from conviction, as well as the drive to maintain discipline, is one of the attitudes of the soul possessed by the leadership. It will be seen and felt in daily practice. Passion arises when the need meets the talent possessed. The results of the data explain that empowerment in low-income families in Sijunjung Regency has not been able to be realized by the enthusiasm and passion for the leadership of the Regional Head. Local governments tend to maximize the morale of work in the field or one community group only, so there has not been unity in the development and empowerment of the community in the Sijunjung Regency. In addition, this is also due to the Regional Head, who has not been able to properly create passion and distance from subordinates and their ranks in carrying out their duties. In line with this, Antonakis and Atwater's research also explains that the distance between leaders and followers, both leaders at the bottom and the community, includes three independent dimensions, namely the physical space of leaders-followers, perceived social distance, and the frequency of perceived task interactions (Antonakis and Atwater 2002).

In Sijunjung Regency, the Regional Head is quite enthusiastic and optimistic about the members they have to be able to carry out their duties and functions correctly. Regional Leaders' enthusiasm is the belief that the best way to see the future is to create it. The respondent's appreciation shows this for the empowerment of their community. Thus, the contagious enthusiasm can provide a sufficiently strong impetus to realize the group's freedom to act at the other party's requests within the established regulations and vision framework.

### **Conscience**

Moral awareness of what is good and bad and the drive to reach meaning and make a real contribution to each person's life are the basic concepts of conscience. Conscience is the power that directs us in achieving the vision, utilizing discipline and passion. Sometimes conscience is at odds with a life dominated by Regional Head Leadership as a central dynamic force that encourages, motivates, and coordinates the organization in achieving goals to meet its needs. Respondents' data shows that conscience or taste in the context of honesty and always being honest can play a role as a force to direct a person in achieving what is his purpose in life. Thus, this will



affect the achievement of the main objective of the Regional Head, namely realizing its functions and duties as a controlling tool to meet the community's needs. Sincerity to do the best in society is the key to the success of every leader. It shows that the leadership of the Regional Head carries out every responsibility in meeting the community's needs. Hence, the leadership of Regional Head in Sijunjung Regency is a sincere leader who is considered quite good by the respondents. The results of the processed data explain that there are interpersonal relationships where people make adjustments because they want to be sincere, not because of coercion.

## **Aspects of Community Empowerment**

### **Motivation**

Motivating followers to influence the community's psyche will facilitate inviting and directing them to do what is appropriate by motivating them. Community empowerment can encourage followers to carry out activities oriented towards renewal to improve people's lives. Such motivations can be:

- a. Achievement motivation encourages society to overcome all challenges and obstacles to achieve goals. People who have this drive want to develop and grow and want to move forward to trace the ladder of success.
- b. Affiliation motivation is the drive to connect with society on a social basis.
- c. Competence motivation is the drive to achieve job excellence, improve problem-solving skills, and strive to be innovative.
- d. Power motivation is the impulse to influence people and change the situation. When power exists, people can use it constructively, or it may be destructive

The data explains that the community aspect in the community empowerment process is highly motivated to get the necessities of life. It is in the form of fulfilling economic, security, social, esteem, actualization, and self-awareness needs. On the government side, the facts on the ground show that motivation in the community empowerment process requires more serious attention. It is mainly about salary, official housing (most employees do not get housing facilities), self-actualization in the form of appreciation for outstanding employees, and ethical awareness in carrying out their duties. The ethical awareness of employees in holding a position is done well. Thus, motivation is a process of activity based on a certain impulse, both from within and outside, inner satisfaction, or the acquisition of a new value that can benefit oneself and the environment. Something that generates a strong enthusiasm or work drive also determines the size of the achievement. The manifestation of this motivation can produce attitudes and behaviors toward the desired goal. It is a solid capital to make the community more active in working, fast, precise, and responsible.

### **Responsibility**

The leadership of the Regional Head is required to have courage in defending his community. It is related to the nature of leadership in realizing the courage to always side with the community to achieve a common goal. The leadership nature of the Regional Head in Sijunjung Regency has a high responsibility for the promise to implement renewed development programs so that increasing income and community welfare is likely to develop. The establishment or fulfillment of promises will not occur if no force drives the government to fulfill promises. One of the driving forces is the awareness of responsibility, namely responsibility as accountability, responsibility as

an obligation, and responsibility as the cause. The sense of responsibility as accountability is related to orders and reports, obligations, and causes. The obligation is about promises and positions, while the cause relates to free will (choice). Obligations and causes are not associated with incentives, either rewards or punishments nor are they due to the influence of other parties. It is simply a strong encouragement by a value system of responsibilities ingrained in his soul, such as promise, obligation, courage in acting on free choice, and readiness to bear risks.

### **How it Works**

Community empowerment through the process of creating a workforce requires skills or skills that are inputs to the success of the work itself. A work that does not seem to be of direct economic value, but work activities can provide inspiration or imagination that has a broad business impact. Work is seen as an input (cost, energy) and can be considered a result, benefit (benefit), or added value. Without work, there will be no results that people can achieve. Regional Head leadership, aware of the importance of being right and good at work, can create a harmonious working relationship. There is a movement that is a determination to organize, clean, maintain steady conditions and maintain the habits necessary to carry out the work well.

The way the leadership works in Sijunjung Regency has a hierarchy of authority and power. However, decentralization has not been fully able to reduce poverty. It is in line with the research (Crawford 2008). Decentralization in poverty alleviation requires political struggle from below so that in implementing a good government system, a relationship between the government and society as a partner is needed (O'toole, Gordon, and Walsh 2022). The Sijunjung Regency Government has implemented a quality work attitude in serving the community. Work attitudes are essential for employees to increase productivity and quality. A government bureaucracy must work with the highest possible efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity level in providing services. From this aspect, every civil servant must prioritize the quality of performance. To improve the way of working by changing positions and roles (revitalization) in serving society starts from the governing and governing to the ministering, from the power approach, to the helpful towards the flexible collaborator and dialogical, and from the slogan way of working towards a pragmatic realistic way of working.

With the versatility of this government bureaucracy, government officials can immediately realize a better and more professional work attitude with procedures that are not long, low costs, fast time, and the possibility of little or almost no complaints from the public. Government bureaucracy (local government officials) will create these conditions if given greater authority in supporting adequate human, equipment, and financial resources so that they can serve both in terms of quality and quantity. Implementing work services, including public goods and services, is the government's responsibility because the relationship between the government and the people is between producers and consumers. In this connection, the people are interested, then the government recognizes, respects fulfills, and protects them (Taliziduhu Ndaha 2015). At this time, the government requires the best work services to satisfy the people. Because the development of society has shifted the classic position of the government, which often acts as the person who has the right to determine which work service is best for the community. The government is no longer the determinant of work services, but the people as customers of the needs and interests offered by the

government because it is the customers who know best which ones are good for their lives.

### **Contribution**

The empowerment process contributes to everything related to society's economic, social, and political conditions. The higher the community's standard of living, the stronger the bargaining position and integrative society will be. But on the other hand, it will reduce the government's function. Government functions changed from rowing to steering. The absolute goal of any community empowerment program is to increase a party's bargaining power to deal with relative equality with other parties. It creates a sense of mutual justice through mutually beneficial solutions (agreements) (Taliziduhu Ndraha 2015). Political community empowerment aims to improve people's bargaining position toward the government. Through this bargaining position, people get what is their right in the form of goods, services, services, and care without harming others. Thus, bargaining, consensus, or compromise between the community and the government can develop and become a strong foundation for the community's economic, social, and political growth in the Sijunjung Regency. Transformation of abilities among individuals or groups can occur and run smoothly, where individuals and community groups can exchange experiences with other parties regarding education, skills, and experience. It will realize the learning process among the community continuously as long as it remains to have a contribution that will ultimately improve social welfare.

If the community's economy is weak, then the government must be able to organize development. If the development is successful, then the economic condition of the community will also improve. Data shows that community empowerment carried out by the Sijunjung Regency Government is directed at business-oriented development, where every economic activity will benefit. Thus, society attempts to save or set aside a part of the income earned. The following contribution can be in the form of thoughts/ideas used to meet the needs of life in the spirit of good intellectual, spiritual and emotional development. So that between aspects of economic development can run well along with social and political development.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of community empowerment is basically to make individuals or communities independent. The means of empowerment include increasing human resources and community institutions to improve individual and social quality, ultimately achieving targets, realizations, and goals. The government can set goals and targets to realize community empowerment through 3 things, namely: (a) creating an atmosphere or climate that allows the potential of the community to develop continuously, (b) protecting the community from the unbalanced competition, and preventing the exploitation of solid economic groups over the weak, (c) strengthening the economic potential of the community in Sijunjung Regency in achieving community empowerment that is relevant to the development of current life. Furthermore, one of the community empowerment processes is strengthening the community economy like the real economy and the development of human resources through the application of transformational leadership, which will be directly related to people's lives to escape from the tools of poverty, backwardness, and unemployment. It follows the results of Salifu and Kufoalor's research, which explained that leaders at the sub-national level must implement more transformational leadership tendencies to encourage



beneficiaries to get out of poverty by developing skills and human resources (Salifu and Kufoalor 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Attention to the existence of community empowerment has the top priority of the government. At the government level, as one of the implementing stakeholders of empowerment for the community, they often do not have a solid commitment to the empowerment process. Meanwhile, in the community aspect, there are still vulnerable communities. It is because of the atmosphere or climate that allows the community's potential not to develop, the weak potential or power of the community, and the occurrence of imbalances in competition in society.

Based on the description from the government's point of view through the dimensions of vision, discipline, passion, and conscience, it can conclude that the Regional Head Leadership is good and will be able to make the organization at all levels of leaders below. Not only that, but the Regional Head must also be willing to provide guidance and guidance to members of the organization, especially in terms of attitude and behavior in solving problems related to tasks and functions and providing positive morale. The working spirit can lift the strength of choice, not the surrounding circumstances. It can be shown by the appreciation of the leadership of the Regional Head so that the spirit of work becomes the spirit possessed by each leader, who, in turn, can encourage the next level. Regional heads can encourage hidden talents to create a moral spirit to provide maximum function per the objectives. They manage themselves better than other people can so that they can achieve the targets and goals in the community empowerment process optimally.

Furthermore, from the point of view of society through the dimensions of motivation, responsibility, way of working, contribution, and goals, it can conclude that the process of community empowerment in the government system is improving. Furthermore, the process is expected to run productively, effectively, and efficiently because community empowerment is a reflective activity of those seeking. So basically, the empowerment process takes place voluntarily and is not an effort to force the will or a process forced from outside for the benefit of the initiator. The better the leadership of the regional head, the more successful the implementation process of community empowerment will be. It will, directly and indirectly, affect the regional authority's leadership spirit (leader) to realize the community's welfare.

## Novelty

This article has novelty in analyzing and explaining the leadership of regional heads holistically from two points of view, namely from the aspect of government and the aspect of society related to the process of realizing community empowerment to achieve community welfare. It will further provide feedback to the government to make better, more effective, efficient, and valuable policies for the community. This research not only explains how the government should act but this research seeks to combine the perspectives of empowering parties with those who will be empowered. So, in the end, it will cause the harmonization of policies that can accelerate the improvement of welfare through community empowerment. Additionally, this research aims to develop the theory of good governance by contributing to the terminology of a new concept of regional head leadership through the synchronization of empirical facts due to the relationship between community involvement in the government system.

The limitations of this study are in the technicalities of community empowerment in the realization of community welfare. Because the approach is carried out holistically by paying attention to the social, political, and economic fields in the process of community empowerment, it is challenging to apply technology in the field. The researcher hopes this can be input for future studies, especially using different theoretical dimensions with a more specific approach. So between the two perspectives, by combining theory and facts in the field, it can realize community empowerment.

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