

Implementation of Community Empowerment Policy (Study on the Customary Institution of Haumeniana Village, Bikomi Nilulat Subdistrict, North Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia)

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ABSTRACT

The village customary institution was established with the aim of fostering an understanding of village development based on local values. However, this goal has not been fully realized as the institution often functions only as a formal structure within the village government, without actively contributing to community empowerment planning. This study, using a qualitative descriptive approach, involved 23 purposively selected informants. Data collection included observations, interviews, document collection, and audio-visual materials. The research found several issues in the implementation of community empowerment policies by the Haumeniana Village customary institution. First, policy standards were flawed from the beginning, leading to ineffective policies. Second, there was a lack of sufficient human resources, incentives, and infrastructure to support policy implementation. Third, communication and coordination efforts between organizations, as well as capacity-building activities, remained ineffective. Fourth, the characteristics of the implementing agents faced challenges at the vertical level, further hindering effective policy implementation. Fifth, the economic conditions in the village were inadequate to support the successful execution of community empowerment policies. Despite these challenges, the study found that the implementers were consistently willing to collaborate with the village government as partners in community empowerment. However, these efforts require significant improvements in policy formulation, resource allocation, communication, and coordination to achieve meaningful results in community development and empowerment.

Keywords: *Adat, Village, Institution, Empowerment.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is home to numerous ethnic groups and diverse customs, spanning from Sabang to Merauke. Within this variety, various cultural practices and beliefs are often observed in specific communities. The existence of a traditional institution within village governance greatly aids in organizing and guiding community practices to be more focused and structured. In communities with a strong traditional environment, the process of engaging rural populations is distinct from that of engaging urban populations. Rural communities can be motivated through local traditions, which are customs that have developed over time, are practiced, and are preserved by the local population.

Indigenous Peoples, as an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia and a reflection of its diversity, are dispersed across the island chain. According to the report, there are indigenous peoples in 31 provinces in Indonesia with a total of about 70 million people, supported by 2,371

communities. The island of Kalimantan recorded the highest number of indigenous communities, with 722 communities, followed by Sulawesi with 644 communities, Sumatra with 392 communities, Bali and Nusa Tenggara with 253 communities, Maluku with 176 communities, Papua with 59 communities, and Java with 55 communities. All these communities are members of the “Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN).” In 2018, the total area of territory allocated to indigenous peoples reached around 10.86 million hectares (ha). The size of these indigenous territories varies, with 42.049 million ha having a high probability, while 45.126 million ha have a very low probability, close to zero (Katadata.co.id, 2020).

Considering the various types of indigenous communities spread across Indonesia, a policy is required to support the diverse activities of all indigenous peoples. One such policy is “Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2014 which regulates villages and indigenous peoples.” This policy allows indigenous communities to establish local customary institutions that function as village partners in community empowerment efforts. Based on the explanation of Article 5 of the policy, namely: “Village Government Institutions, Village Community Institutions, and Village Customary Institutions.” These organizations grow and develop in line with the historical context of an indigenous community, helping to organize, manage, and resolve various issues related to village life and customs. One example is Haumeniana Village, located in Bikomi Nilulat Subdistrict, North Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, which is one of the villages that has a Customary Institution. This institution has a significant role in traditions, progress, and village administration.

The presence of customary institutions in Haumeniana Village significantly impacts community life, with the community respecting and adhering to them. This influence is evident in their ability to regulate customs and address social issues within the community according to traditional practices, for this reason, traditional leaders and officials are required to recognize this and enhance their efforts which can help governance and empower the community. This aligns with the “Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2018 regarding Village Community Institutions and Village Customary Institutions.” The regulation explains that there is a “Village Customary Institution (LAD)” responsible to support the Village Government and being a collaborator in empowerment, maintaining and enhancing adat. This recognizes the traditions of the village community, highlighting that one of the primary duties of the LAD is to strengthen the community.

It is important to note that the concept of empowerment is regarded as part of the post-modernism movement, as it emerged in the mid-20th century. The development of the empowerment concept stems from actions and reactions to existing thought patterns, societal systems, and prior cultural frameworks within a country. Fundamentally, empowerment operates at both the personal and communal levels (Surjono, Nugroho, 2007: 25). Empowerment has become a new prevailing trend approach aimed at enhancing welfare and reducing poverty within communities. In this context, empowerment signifies that existing community assets are valuable development resources that should be harnessed to increase their benefits for the community. In addition, empowerment is a method by which individuals, institutions, and people have the independence to be able to take care of individual interests. (Strzelecka et al, 2017).

However, it was found that the existence of the LAD in its task of empowering the community tends to be underutilized in every community empowerment group activity in Haumeniana Village. Adat institutions are not always involved in policy-making processes at the village level, and adat administrators have struggled to increase active community involvement, especially in the advancement and safeguarding of cultural values that encourage community empowerment through the growth of adat institutions. Meanwhile, the existence of LADs is a strategic opportunity to uphold and preserve local wisdom and the spirit of gotong royong of village communities. This is particularly relevant with the government's large incentives to encourage village development through village funds. These institutions act as partners to the village government, helping to safeguard and utilize village resources as an effort to improve the interests of the public and its surroundings.

In Haumeniana Village, there are ongoing issues concerning the function of the LAD : (1). The institution contributes less in sectors such as community empowerment, for example community health care, community education, and the social and economic sectors of the community; (2). the institution lack a program or activity plan that aligns with the customs practiced in the village; (3). Customary institution management bodies do not have a workplace/workspace as a secretariat for services/implementation of programs/activities; (4). The execution of village government activities often overlooks community institutions, instead placing a higher emphasis on the involvement of individual community members. This indicates that the communication between the village administration and the customary authorities community organization forum is not functioning effectively; (5). The Haumeniana government appears to overlook the function of customary institutions in strengthening customary values; (6). Customary values are slowly being masked due to technological developments.

The function of customary institutions established to improve insight in village development based on local values has not been effectively realized, given the character of the local community. Instead, these institutions are often used merely to meet the formal requirements of the village government structure, lacking any significant involvement in the community empowerment planning process. This reflects a gap in the implementation of village governance, as the village government failed to deliver on its duties in managing village interests.

With explanation previously mentioned, to analyze the implementation of community empowerment policies by the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution, Bikomi Nilulat Subdistrict, North Central Timor Regency, the author uses the theory of “Van Meter and Van Horn called A Model of the Policy Implementation (1975).” This model presumes that policy implementation follows a sequential path from public policy to implementers, and subsequently to the outcomes of public policy. Essentially, this model is not designed to assess or explain the ultimate outcomes of government policies; rather, it aims to evaluate and elucidate what is referred to as program achievement. According to this perspective, a policy might be implemented effectively yet still fall short of producing the intended substantial impact due to poor structuring or other factors. In their theory, Van Meter and Van Horn begin with the premise that the implementation process will differ based on the characteristics of the policy being executed. Additionally, Van Meter and Van Horn present key characteristics of the implementation process. First, the implementation will be affected by how much the policy

diverges from earlier policies. Second, the process will also be shaped by various necessary organizational changes.

METHOD

A qualitative approach with descriptive methods is the method used in the presentation of this research. The informants were chosen intentionally, totaling 23 participants. The researcher will adhere to the data collection steps described by Creswell (2016: 254-255), which encompass “qualitative observation, qualitative interviews, searches for qualitative documents, and qualitative audio and visual materials.”

The gathered data is then examined through data analysis methods outlined by Creswell (2016: 264-268). The analysis steps used by researchers are as follows:

1. Before analyzing, researchers started by preparing the data first.
2. Subsequently, once the data was prepared, it was reviewed in its entirety.
3. In the next stage, all data can be divided according to the code or category of the group, such as can be divided into:
 - a. Category that are related to the main issue, usually known by the reader, can be obtained from previous research or common issues in society.
 - b. Category that were surprising and unforeseen at the outset of the research.
 - c. Category that are unusual and conceptually intriguing to the reader.
4. After that, coding was applied to detail issues, participants, categories and themes for further analysis.
5. The following step involves the researcher describing the aforementioned themes and presenting in the form of a narrative explanation or structured report.
6. The final stage is to compile a data presentation or conduct data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Community Empowerment Policy by the Customary Institution of Haumeniana Village, Bikomi Nilulat Subdistrict, North Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara

To analyze how the implementation of community empowerment policies by the customary institution of Haumeniana Village, Bikomi Nilulat Subdistrict, North Central Timor District, North East Nusa Tenggara, in the results of this research and discussion the author uses the “policy implementation model of Donald Van Meter and Carl E. Van Horn (1975)” which indicates that six variables affect policy implementation. These six variables will then be linked to the phenomena observed at the research site and will be explored in greater detail as follows:

1. Policy standards and objectives

Policy standards and objectives play a crucial role in directing policy implementation, as well as ensuring alignment with the intended program. This is confirmed by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 464), who state that when setting policy standards and objectives, researchers can refer to statements from policy makers, such as regulations and program guidelines. Thus, policy implementation can be directed and minimize the potential for diverse interpretations among implementers.

In the implementation of community empowerment policies by adat institutions in Haumeniana Village, there are significant challenges that need to be considered. According to Van Meter and Van Horn, there are no policy standards set at the village level that clearly outline the duties and functions of customary institutions in the community empowerment process. The absence of this standard has the potential to cause failure in policy implementation. As expressed by Hogwood and Gunn (in Wahab, 1997: 61), the absence of clear standards will lead to uncertainty in policy implementation, which in turn can hinder the effectiveness of expected empowerment programs.

The Haumeniana Village Customary Institution lacks the authority to manage its own activities. When it comes to issues related to adat, people tend to trust the tribal chief more, indicating a lack of trust in or accessibility to adat institutions. The absence of clear policy standards also suggests that the role of adat institutions in community empowerment has not been properly recognized or managed, reducing their effectiveness. As a result, the role of the village government has become more visible, which may indicate an imbalance in decision-making and representation between adat institutions and the government.

The impact of the lack of effective policy standards is that communities do not value or recognize the role of the Village Customary Institution in their empowerment process. This creates a distance between the adat institution and the community, which should benefit from its existence. Although the customary institution has a strong history and has been operating since long before Haumeniana Village was established, the community currently feels that the institution is not providing any tangible benefits in their lives. In fact, this institution was established long before the implementation of policy standards provided by “Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages” and the related regulations, including the “Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2018 regarding Village Community Institutions and Village Customary Institutions.”

2. Resources

To effectively implement community empowerment policies, the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution requires support from of human resources as well as other resources that are not physical. Without these two types of resources, community empowerment efforts may not go well, so the potential within the community cannot be optimally utilized. According to Widodo (2011: 98) explains that to successfully implement the policy, several types of resources must be considered including “human resources, financial resources, as well as equipment resources, which include buildings, equipment, land, and other elements necessary for policy implementation.”

The Haumeniana Village customary institution comprises 8 individuals, including 1 chairperson and 7 members. However, having a sufficient number of resources for policy implementation does not guarantee success if the implementers are unable to effectively utilize those resources. Haumeniana Village has potential human resources that should be utilized, but the Haumeniana Village Government has not maximized the use of these resources to improve community welfare. This suggests a lack of collaboration or communication between customary institutions and the village government. In addition, the fact that the institution has no functions in the areas of health, education, social, economic and community empowerment indicates a lack of integration or relevance of adat institutions in important aspects of community life. There is also no program or

activity design that aligns with the village's customs. Furthermore, the activities of the Haumeniana Village Government tend to exclude community institutions, focusing instead on engaging individual community members. Regarding financial resources, the Haumeniana customary institution has never received any incentives from the village fund allocation each year.

This finding creates a paradox, as the effectiveness of policy implementation is highly dependent on the ability to make good use of existing resources in supporting implementation activities. Inadequacy in terms of funding or incentives can lead to failure in achieving policy objectives (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1974: 465), such as the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution, which showed that despite efforts to empower the community, failure to provide sufficient resources contributed to the lack of effectiveness of the policy implementation. In line with Van Meter and Van Horn, Goggin et al. (1990: 31) The importance of budget as an indicator to evaluate the success of policy implementation. This assessment is based on the assumption that a larger budget allocation indicates the seriousness and commitment of the authorities in implementing the policy. However, in Haumeniana Village, the limited financial resources available to the village customary institution hinder its ability to effectively carry out the community empowerment policy.

Facilities are also another important resource. Edward III, cited in Widodo (2010: 96), explains that although implementers have the capacity and a good understanding of their duties, success in implementing policies can be hampered if not supported by adequate facilities. The facilities in question include various things, such as guidelines, infrastructure, and other supporting facilities needed to carry out activities effectively. Currently, at the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution, the lack of facilities, including the absence of a permanent building, is a serious challenge that can hinder the effectiveness of planned activities and programs.

3. Inter-organizational communication and strengthening activities

Coordination is defined as a way to ensure that all parties involved in policy implementation work well together. The effectiveness of good communication between the parties is essential to harmonize their goals, expectations and actions. If communication and coordination run smoothly, then the potential for errors, confusion, or conflict can be minimized. Conversely, poor communication can lead to significant errors. Thus, effective communication is essential for successfully achieving the goals of public policy implementation. Successful implementation takes place when decision-makers clearly understand their actions. Effective communication refers to the ability to convey information clearly and precisely between decision makers and policy implementers. Good communication helps ensure that all parties have the same understanding of the objectives, procedures, and expectations of the implemented policy.

According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 466), and in relation to the implementation of community empowerment policies by the Haumeniana Village customary institution, interorganizational communication can be assessed through: (1) coordination with other agencies, which refers to the connections between the implementing agency and the policy executor in conveying community empowerment policies. In fact, there are problems in the working relationship between the Haumeniana

Village Government and the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution. While both entities are supposed to collaborate with each other in implementing government activities and policies, the reality is that customary institutions are often left out. This suggests a lack of communication and coordination between the two organizations.

The consequences of a lack of involvement of customary institutions can also reduce the effectiveness of community empowerment programs. Still according to Van Meter and Van Horn emphasize that to ensure proper implementation, it is important for policy decisions and implementation guidelines to be communicated to the right people. Without adequate communication, the potential to achieve those policy objectives is lowered, which in turn hinders the success of community empowerment initiatives in Haumeniana Village.

According to Quade (1984: 310), optimization of inter-organizational communication in policy implementation occurs through active interaction between all parties involved. This includes the implementing organization responsible for the policy, the target group who are the beneficiaries, as well as the environmental factors that affect the policy. When all parties interact effectively, the responses that arise can create pressure to increase collaboration and find appropriate solutions. The negotiation or transaction process resulting from this pressure creates an opportunity for the parties to dialogue, listen to each other, and formulate a better agreement. Through these transactions, feedback is gathered that can serve as input for policymakers in developing future policies. However, in Haumeniana Village, the various forms of inter-organizational communication such as interactions and responses from the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution have not been recognized or integrated at the Village Government level. As a result, there is a lack of feedback to inform recommendations for subsequent policy formulations, ultimately leading to ineffective policy implementation by the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution. The Village Government tends to address issues independently, while the community does not rely on the Village Customary Institution, as they trust their tribal chief more for handling customary matters related to community empowerment.

The findings mentioned show harmony with experts' views on the importance of a clear understanding of roles in policy implementation (Van Meter & Van Horn (1975: 466); Quade (1984: 310). Edward III adds that without a clear understanding of roles, program implementation will not be effective. Thus, customary institutions are expected to operate in accordance with their established duties and functions in order to optimally contribute to policy implementation. This customary institution was not merely established to serve as an adjunct to the village government; rather, it also plays a supportive role in government activities at the village level. When customary institutions effectively collaborate with the village government in fulfilling their responsibilities, the governance in Haumeniana Village is likely to function smoothly, benefiting all residents of the village.

4. Implementing Agent Characteristics

This study examines evaluating the role and participation of adat institutions in Haumeniana Village in the implementation of policies aimed at empowering the community. This includes an analysis of how customary institutions contributed to the policy and the extent to which they were involved in the implementation process. It

considers the characteristics of the participants, whether they are supportive or oppositional, as well as the prevailing public opinion in the community and the extent of support from political elites for the policy implementation. Implementing agent characteristics, such as bureaucratic structure and prevailing norms, influence the way community empowerment policies are implemented in Haumeniana Village (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975: 472). An effective bureaucracy and norms that support collaboration can help implementers perform their duties better. The attitude of the implementers plays a key role. If implementers have a positive attitude and commitment to the task, they will be more likely to carry out the policy well, collaborate with others, and face challenges that may arise. Each implementing agency, including the Haumeniana Village customary institution, must have a sense of ownership over their assigned duties, guided by the established policy standards and objectives.

Every policy implementing agent possesses unique characteristics, which leads Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 471) to identify several elements that can influence these characteristics within an organization tasked with policy implementation. Relating this to the research issue concerning the role of village customary institutions in executing community empowerment policies in Haumeniana Village, the findings of the research are as follows: (1) based on the author's interviews and observations, the competence and size of the staff within the Haumeniana Village customary institution indicate that the administrators are chosen based on their understanding of the cultural values and customs relevant to the village. However, in practice, the Haumeniana Village Government does not fully utilize the competence of these administrators. The village customary institution is often excluded from decision-making processes, particularly regarding customary matters, which leads to an underutilization of its role as a platform for community empowerment, (2) based on the author's detailed observations and interviews, it is evident that the village customary institution's decision-making is overseen by the village head, who leads the Haumeniana Village government, as well as by the village community. This aligns with Ripley and Franklin's (1986: 11) discussion on the degree of compliance among subordinate agents to their superior counterparts (3) according to Grindle (1980: 10), the political foundation of an organization can be observed through decision-making that involves political actors. However, in implementing community empowerment policies, Haumeniana Village customary institutions have no political affiliations or sources. (4) The level of open communication refers to the existence of horizontal and vertical communication networks that operate freely among policy implementers, as well as considerable freedom in interacting with individuals outside the organization. This statement is in line with Ripley and Franklin (1986: 11), emphasizing that in the implementation process, implementers need to have the freedom to make the necessary adjustments according to the situation at hand.

Customary institutions in Haumeniana Village have an important role as supporters of the village government in community empowerment efforts. However, there are obstacles in vertical communication, where input and suggestions from village customary institutions are not considered by the village government. This creates a gap between expectations and reality, where customary institutions are unable to contribute effectively to the decision-making process. This situation is all the more problematic as it contradicts

regulations that are supposed to make adat institutions partners with the village government. Ideally, adat institutions should have a voice and an active role in formulating and implementing community empowerment policies, so this mismatch can affect the effectiveness of empowerment programs run in the village.

5. economic and political conditions

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 471), suggest that conditions outside an organization can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of public policy implementation. When external factors such as social, economic, or political are not supportive or create difficult conditions, policy implementation can be hampered. This suggests that policy success depends not only on the internal efforts of an agency, but also on broader conditions that affect the operational environment. The importance of considering these external factors emphasizes the need for collaboration and support from various stakeholders, as well as policy adaptations that can adjust to ongoing conditions. Environmental factors play an important role in shaping the willingness and capacity of a jurisdiction or organization to support the structure, continuity and competence of the administrative body, as well as the extent of political support received. Environmental conditions can influence policy implementers without changing their personal views on the policy. Finally, these factors are considered to have a direct impact on public service delivery. While environmental conditions can support or hinder success, the attitudes of implementers and other dynamics within this framework also contribute to the implementation process.

Referring to the research questions posed by Van Meter and Van Horn regarding the impact of the economic, social, and political environment on the jurisdiction or organization responsible for the implementation of community empowerment policies by the Haumeniana Village customary institution, the research findings can be summarized as follows: (1) the lack of economic resources, especially in the form of an adequate budget, is a major obstacle in achieving the success of the policy. Without sufficient funding allocations, customary institutions cannot effectively implement planned activities, (2) the lack of planned activity programs results in customary institutions not being able to influence the social and economic conditions of the community. This shows that the existence of adat institutions has no real impact, as they do not have clear directions and goals in carrying out their duties, (3) negative public opinion towards adat institutions is caused by the lack of clarity in the proposed programs, which results in a lack of recognition of the institution's performance. People feel that adat institutions do not contribute to the development of community empowerment, even though their existence is formally recognized, (4) although village elites show support for the role of adat institutions, the reality is that they are often not involved in policy formulation and decision-making processes. This creates a gap between their expressed support and their actual participation in governance practices, indicating that the existence of adat institutions has not been maximized to achieve community empowerment goals.

The dimensions of the social, economic, and political environment are external factors that significantly influence the success or failure of policies. Evaluating policy implementation performance involves examining how well the external environment supports these policies. An adverse social, economic, or political climate can create challenges for effective policy implementation. Therefore, successful policy

implementation relies on favorable external environmental conditions that facilitate the process.

In Haumeniana Village, the external dimensions of the social, economic, and political environment that support the implementation of community empowerment policies reveal that economic resources are inadequate for successful policy execution. Furthermore, the existing economic and social conditions specifically, the community's economic situation and social dynamics cannot be impacted by the village customary institution due to the lack of a well-defined activity program. Most community members indicated that the lack of a proposed activity program has resulted in public perception of the Haumeniana Village customary institution's role in community empowerment policies not demonstrating any tangible performance. While the elites in Haumeniana Village express support for customary institutions in these policies, in reality, these institutions are not engaged in all aspects of policy formulation and decision-making. This situation arises from the sectoral ego of the Village Government, which views the Village Customary Institution merely as a supplementary entity and an implementer of village law, rather than as a partner in community empowerment.

The situation in Haumeniana Village aligns with Van Metter and Van Horn's (1975: 471) assertion that an unfavorable economic, social, and political environment, as observed in Haumeniana Village regarding the implementation of community empowerment policies by village customary institutions, can lead to the failure of policy implementation performance. Consequently, it is essential for policy implementation efforts to consider the supportive nature of external environmental conditions. Building on Van Meter and Van Horn's statement, Korten (1988) in Tarigan (2000: 19) contends that a program is likely to succeed if it aligns with the needs of its beneficiaries. However, in Haumeniana Village, the economic conditions of the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution are inadequate, leading to a disconnect between the program and its intended beneficiaries the villagers who are meant to be empowered by the Village Customary Institution. Another opinion from Korten (1988) also emphasizes the importance of aligning the program with the implementing organization. In Haumeniana Village, the external environment, particularly the political interests of the Village Government, overshadowed the role of the village customary institution as a partner in community empowerment. This dynamic hindered the effectiveness of the implementing organization specifically, the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution and ultimately compromised the interests of the social environment, which in this case refers to the community.

6. Implementor disposition

The attitude of implementers in public policy has a significant impact on the success of implementation. Van Metter and Van Horn (1975:472) point out that if implementers are positive about the policy, they are more likely to support and implement it well. Conversely, if they reject the policy or are neutral, the implementation is at risk of experiencing obstacles. Elements such as how implementers understand the policy (cognition), how they respond to the policy (whether they accept, neutral, or reject), as well as how strong the policy is (intensity), play an important role in determining how the policy will be implemented. The absence of a thorough understanding of the policy objectives and standards can hinder its successful implementation. Therefore, in order to

achieve the desired results, it is crucial for implementers to have a good understanding of the policy they are implementing and have a positive attitude towards it.

Implementers may experience difficulties in implementing a policy if they reject the objectives that have been set (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975: 473). If implementers reject or disagree with policy objectives, they may feel unmotivated or even avoid implementation, thus creating obstacles in the process. On the other hand, according to Kaufman (cited in the same page) if the implementers have a strong understanding and acceptance of the policy objectives and standards, they will be more likely to commit to implementing them. As a result, it has the potential to increase the chances of success in policy implementation, because implementers feel involved and have a greater sense of responsibility for achieving the policy objectives.

The intensity of implementers' dispositions can influence policy performance. A lack or insufficient intensity of this disposition may result in unsuccessful policy implementation. Regarding the role of village customary institutions in executing community empowerment policies in Haumeniana Village, evidence was found concerning the implementer's disposition or their attitudes of acceptance and rejection towards the policy being implemented, namely; (1) the implementer's response, specifically the management of the Haumeniana Village customary institution towards the policy, will impact their willingness to implement it. According to Edward III, as cited in Winarno (2005: 142), if the implementers exhibit a positive inclination or support for the policy, there is a strong likelihood that the implementation will proceed as originally intended.

On the other hand, if the implementers have a negative attitude or resist policy implementation due to conflicts of interest, significant challenges will arise. In practice, the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution, which is tasked with community empowerment, is always willing to support the village government as a partner in this effort. However, the activities of the Village Government often do not involve the customary institutions and instead focus on engaging community members directly. For instance, in resolving customary land disputes among residents and addressing marital issues, the community tends to favor involving customary elders rather than the customary institutions themselves. The role of customary institutions is becoming less noticeable as the Village Government appears to overlook their contribution to reinforcing customary values. This neglect leads to a gradual erosion of these values, as their potential remains underutilized in Haumeniana Village.

This contradicts Robert Eyestone's assertion in Winarno (2007: 15), which defines public policy as "the establishment of positive relationships between government units and their environment." In practice, however, the relationship between the Haumeniana Village Government and the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution is not functioning effectively, (2) cognition refers to the understanding that the management of the Haumeniana Village customary institution has regarding its role in community empowerment. Citing Wildavsky's perspective in Leslie A. Pal (1987: 9), cognitive activity involves processes related to learning and thinking, which encompass the definition, determination, resolution, and evaluation of policy issues. While cognitive elements play a central role in this process, they are not the sole focus. It is considered to

have a central role because, as noted by Leslie A. Pal (1987: 19), the actual policy process primarily involves the discussion and debate of ideas regarding priorities, problems, and potential solutions.

The cognitive aspect pertains to how an individual or policy implementer, in this case, the management of the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution, perceives its role in empowering the village community. This involves clarifying, justifying, and rationalizing their perspectives. However, in practice, the cognitive understanding of the policy implementor namely, the Village Customary Institution can be deemed insufficient. This is because the implementers lack a clear understanding of the policies that outline the duties and functions of customary institutions in the village. This deficiency relates to the processes of learning and thinking, which are essential for defining, determining, solving, and reviewing policy issues. As a result, the management of the Haumeniana Village Customary Institution fails to fulfill its responsibilities as a partner in empowering the Haumeniana Village community. This is because Haumeniana Village faces challenges in implementing community empowerment policies due to the lack of program plans that are aligned with local traditions, (3) the disposition or attitude of implementers in Haumeniana Village's customary institutions, which includes the values they hold, plays an important role in community empowerment policies. The customary institution seeks to maintain existing traditions and cultural values, and tries to integrate them with religious values and village government policies. They try to resolve any differences that may arise in a fair way, so that all parties benefit. However, challenges arise because the methods used are still undocumented customs, which can hamper the effectiveness and transparency of policy implementation. Without a clear and written plan of activities, customary institutions may struggle to formulate strategic measures for community empowerment, potentially reducing the positive impact of their presence. In other words, despite good intentions and efforts to maintain a balance between tradition and modernity, the lack of formal structures may hinder the optimal achievement of community empowerment policy objectives.

CONCLUSION

The community empowerment policy implemented by the Haumeniana Village customary institution in the Bikomi Nilulat Subdistrict of North Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara, was analyzed using the policy implementation model proposed by Donald Van Meter and Carl E. Van Horn (1975). This model identifies six variables that impact implementation: (1) the policy standards are flawed, indicating that the policy may have been poorly conceived from the outset; (2) there is a lack of sufficient human resources, incentives, and infrastructure; (3) inter-organizational communication and strengthening activities are not effective; (4) the characteristics of the implementing agent face challenges at the vertical level, as the inputs provided by the village customary institution for community empowerment are not effectively integrated at the community level or with the Village Government; (5) the economic conditions within the jurisdiction or implementing organization are inadequate to support the community empowerment policy; and (6) the disposition of the implementers shows that while the management of the village customary institution is willing to support the

village government as a partner in community empowerment, it is often not included in the implementation process.

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