

OPTIMIZATION OF VILLAGE GOVERNMENT POLICY IN STRENGTHENING EDUCATION (Case Study of Japan Village, Tegalrejo District)

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Abstract

The village government has been given the authority to participate in community empowerment efforts in the field of Education. However, in the educational process, there are still obstacles related to infrastructure. Settlement of these obstacles, still rely on self-help community. The implementation of village government policies as referred to in Law Number 6 of 2014 and regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia number 84 of 2015 Article 26 paragraph (2) varies and there are still some that are not optimal. This study aims to determine the optimization of village government policies in efforts to strengthen education. The study was conducted in the village of Japan with a qualitative approach. Subjects were determined using the purposive sampling method. Data collection by observation, interview, and documentation, then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results showed that the form of Village policy in the field of education can be in the form of incentives for educators, operational assistance and infrastructure. The Village policy process has gone through the stages of problem identification, agenda preparation, drafting, ratification, implementation and Policy Evaluation. Village policies in the field of Education have an impact on increasing the spirit of teaching educators, the spirit of learning of learners, and increasing public awareness of the importance of Education. In conclusion, optimizing village policies in the field of education in the form of infrastructure, through a good process can increase the spirit of learning and teaching.

Keywords: Education, Policy, Village Government,

Abstrak

Pemerintah desa telah diberikan kewenangan untuk ikut dalam upaya pemberdayaan masyarakat dalam bidang pendidikan. Namun, dalam proses pendidikan, masih ditemukan kendala terkait sarana prasarana. Penyelesaian kendala tersebut, masih mengandalkan swadaya masyarakat. Implementasi kebijakan Pemerintah Desa sebagaimana disebut dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 dan Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia Nomor 84 Tahun 2015 pasal 26 ayat (2) berbeda-beda dan masih ada yang belum optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui optimalisasi kebijakan pemerintah desa dalam upaya penguatan pendidika. Penelitian dilakukan di Desa Japan dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Subjek ditentukan menggunakan metode purposive sampling. Pengambilan data dengan

cara observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bentuk kebijakan desa bidang pendidikan dapat berupa pemberian insentif bagi pendidik, bantuan operasional dan sarana prasarana. Proses kebijakan desa telah melalui tahap identifikasi masalah, penyusunan agenda, penyusunan, pengesahan, implementasi dan evaluasi kebijakan. Kebijakan desa dalam bidang pendidikan berdampak menambah semangat mengajar pendidik, semangat belajar peserta didik, dan meningkatkan kesadaran masyarakat terhadap pentingnya pendidikan. Kesimpulannya optimalisasi kebijakan desa dibidang pendidikan dalam bentuk sarana prasarana, dengan melalui proses yang baik dapat meningkatkan semangat belajar dan mengajar.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan, Kebijakan, Pemerintah Desa,

INTRODUCTION

The village government has now been given authority in the field of education. This authority is regulated in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages and also in Government Regulations related to education. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 84 of 2015 on the Structure and Operations of Village Governments, Article 6(2), states: "The village head is responsible for administering village governance, implementing village development, community development, and community empowerment." Village development is not merely about physical aspects and infrastructure but also includes community empowerment in the field of education.

Education is an organized effort to shape an individual's character and develop their potential for the better (Wulandari, 2017). Educational institutions in Indonesia are divided into three recognized streams: formal, non-formal, and informal education, which include Islamic and general education (Darlis, 2017). All three institutions are equally important and, in practice, they complement each other (Haerullah & Elihami, 2020).

Formal education is a structured and tiered educational pathway consisting of primary, secondary, and higher education. Formal educational institutions, Islamic education is implemented in madrasahs and Islamic universities (Darlis, 2017). Non-formal education has a broad scope, complementing formal education, and can also stand alone. Current examples of non-formal Islamic education include Quranic education centers (TPQ/TPA) (Mulyono, 2012). Informal education, on the other hand, is family and community-based education in the form of self-directed learning activities. Informal education does not require a structured curriculum and occurs spontaneously, and can be carried out at any time (Wardhani, 2016).

The importance of education in general is stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in Article 3, which aims to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation. National education aims to develop the potential of students to

become individuals who are faithful and devout to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Additionally, education is important for life itself, including enhancing career and employment opportunities, as education enables individuals to acquire the necessary skills for the workforce and supports career development. Furthermore, education cultivates character within oneself to become a better human resource (Alpian et al., 2019). In addition to general education, Islamic education is equally important. Islam, as an entity, serves as a guide for human life in the pursuit of happiness, well-being, and peace, requiring the internalization of Islamic values in daily life, which is implemented through educational aspects (Rafliyanto & Mukhlis, 2023). Especially for teenagers in the era of globalization, moral and ethical education helps teenagers return to the right path or align with Islamic teachings, and filter out cultures or teachings that do not align with the spirit of Islam (Aji Prasetyo, 2023).

Both formal and non-formal education are crucial for the nation's future generations and the sustainability of society. However, there are still issues with the facilities and infrastructure in the implementation process. Educational facilities can be divided into several types, including educational media and learning equipment. Meanwhile, educational infrastructure can be divided into two categories: school buildings and school furniture (Tri Ridlo Dina Yuliana et al., 2023). As the researcher found in 2020, there is a madrasah building in Purworejo Village, Candimulyo District, which has been renovated, but its construction still relies on community self-help, and there is no visible implementation of village policies.

The implementation of a policy is a very important step in the policy process. Without implementation, a policy is merely a document or a meaningless hope (Sugandi, 2011). The implementation of educational development policies is a form of innovation program in human resource development efforts that begins in villages through existing educational programs to produce high-quality, well-educated individuals. Implementation involves actions by various actors, particularly government bureaucrats, who are specifically tasked with creating policies (Pawestri & Dafira Nugroho, 2017). Regarding the fulfillment of the right to education, it is the responsibility of the state through the government (central, provincial, district/city) down to the village level. However, the role of parents and the community cannot be overlooked (Sujatmoko, 2016).

The implementation of government policies related to education was found by researchers in Japan Village, Tegalorejo District. This policy was motivated by the low level of education among village residents, prompting the village government to issue Village Regulation (PerDes) No. 2 of 2019 on the "2020 Japan Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget." This PerDes has been ratified annually to date. In the 2024 PerDes, the allocation for education funds in Japan Village is the largest in Tegalorejo Subdistrict.

From the above descriptions, the researcher argues that there are differences in village policies related to strengthening education in Purworejo Village and Japan Village. Japan Village can implement more village policies related to education, while Purworejo Village still lacks them. Therefore, the researcher is interested in exploring the question: "Optimizing Village Government Policies in Efforts to Strengthen Education in Magelang Regency (Case Study of Japan Village, Tegalrejo Subdistrict)?"

METHOD

This study was conducted in Japan Village using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research to understand phenomena related to events perceived by subjects, such as perceptions, motivations, and behaviors, and the explanations are presented in the form of descriptions using words and language (Moloeng, 2017). The subjects were selected using purposive sampling, namely the village head, village secretary, BPD, religious leaders, Paud/TK teachers, TPQ/TPA teachers, and Majlis taklim leaders in Japan Village. After obtaining research permission, data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation from January 3 to 4, 2025. After the data was collected, data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Rosyada, 2020). To reduce bias, a triangulation process was conducted, namely source triangulation. According to Lincoln and Guba, as cited in Wijaya (2018), source triangulation is performed by cross-checking data with facts from different subjects, village documents/archives, and other research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Village Government Policy in the Field of Education

The Village Government is responsible for implementing policies formulated by the Government and/or Regional Government in order to improve the welfare of the village community. Village Government policies on education are regulated in the Village Law No. 6 of 2014, Article 1, paragraph (3). Legally and formally, the authority of the village to regulate development matters is formulated into the Medium-Term Village Development Plan (RPJMDes), which is a strategic planning document prepared by the village government as a guide for directing village development over the medium term (Rahmat et al., 2018). The goal of development naturally prioritizes quality and progressive human development, so education serves as both the target and means of development within the context of basic social services for the village community (Gayam, D. B. in Noviani et al., 2023). The village of Japan has established village policies related to development in the field of education. Based on observations of village documents and interviews conducted by

the researcher with the Village Head and Secretary of Japan Village on January 0, 2025, the Village Head stated that:

"We allocate the Village Budget (APBDes) in the field of education primarily for incentives for preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, and teachers at the TPA. Additionally, it is also allocated for operational assistance for food and beverages during monthly gatherings at religious study sessions and parent-teacher meetings at PAUD. For infrastructure, we also allocate funds for PAUD student uniforms and PAUD teacher uniforms."

The above is also reinforced by the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. Sabar, the Village Secretary of Japan:

"We have been budgeting for the Village Budget (APBDes) in the education sector for the past five years, and we have increased the amount each year. What we have implemented in 2024 includes incentives for preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, and teachers at the TPA. For student uniforms and preschool teachers. We have also provided consumption assistance for monthly events and parent-teacher meetings for PAUD, as well as the purchase of laptops to support educational facilities at PAUD. This is to encourage them to be more enthusiastic in learning and teaching."

In addition to interviews, the researcher also observed village documents in the Village Financial System (SISKUEDES) regarding changes to the 2024 budget plan, leading to the conclusion that the forms of village policies related to education implemented from the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBDes) of Japan Village are as follows: Early childhood education teacher incentives, kindergarten teacher incentives, TPA teacher incentives, early childhood education teacher uniforms, early childhood education student uniforms, budget for early childhood education parent consumption, budget for majlis taklim consumption, and laptops for early childhood education facilities.

By implementing the above policies, Japan Village has complied with Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 84 of 2015 on the Structure and Operations of Village Governments, Article 6(2), which states, *"The village head is responsible for administering village governance, implementing village development, fostering community development, and empowering the community."* Village development is not only about physical aspects and infrastructure, but also about community empowerment in terms of education. The forms of village policies in education in Japan Village can be categorized as follows: (1) Forms of village policies in formal education, namely: incentives for preschool teachers, incentives for kindergarten teachers, uniforms for preschool teachers, uniforms for preschool students, budget for parent consumption in preschool, and laptops for preschool educational facilities. (2) Village policies in non-formal education, including:

incentives for TPA teachers and budgets for monthly expenses for religious study groups. This policy can be further specified as village policies in non-formal Islamic education.

The Village Policy Process

Public policy, as described above, does not simply come into being, but rather through a lengthy process or series of stages. To understand the process of village policy in Japan related to education, researchers used Thomas R. Dye's theory, which consists of six steps, as follows (Prabawati et al., 2017):

Identification of Policy Issues

Policy issues can be identified by identifying the demands placed on government action. Article 6(2) of Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 84 of 2015 concerning the structure and work procedures of village governments also states that *"the village head is responsible for administering the village government, implementing village development, community development, and community empowerment."* Village development is not only about physical aspects and infrastructure, but also about community empowerment in terms of education. This supports the background for the formation of village policies in the field of education, as demographic data shows that the education level of the village population in Japan is relatively low, with the majority being elementary school graduates (744 people, or 49.9%) and 146 people (9.79%) not completing elementary school. Additionally, the economic level of the population remains low, with the majority engaged in farming (561 people, 37.82%) earning incomes below the Magelang Regency Minimum Wage. In terms of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) achievement, Japan Village has reached 36.66% for quality education and 43.37% for poverty eradication. This is further supported by the results of the researcher's interviews with the Village Head, Village Secretary, and Village Council (BPD) of Japan Village on January 3, 2025. Mr. Rudy Atmoko, the Village Head, stated that:

"This policy was established because village financial management regulations allow for the support of community education within the scope of their authority, such as early childhood education, kindergarten, Islamic kindergarten, and Quranic education. Considering that there had been no special attention given to such education previously, the village government stepped in to help provide funding to support the continuity of such education."

Furthermore, Mr. Secretary of Japan Village also mentioned that:

"This policy was established because the welfare, particularly the economic well-being of the residents, is still insufficient, which impacts education. It is hoped that with this policy, children will be more enthusiastic about attending school, and teachers will teach even better."

This is reinforced by the researcher's interview with Mr. Prihandoko, a member of the Japan Village Council:

"Following the enactment of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, the village received a Village Fund allocation from the central government, estimated at 1 billion rupiah annually, which can be used, among other things, to support education, which remains low in Japan Village."

It can be concluded that the background for the creation of this village policy related to education is:

Village Law and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation

Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages and also in Government Regulations related to education. Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 84 of 2015 concerning the structure and work procedures of village governments, article 6 paragraph (2) states that "The village head is tasked with administering village government, implementing village development, community guidance, and community empowerment." Village development is not only about physical aspects and infrastructure, but also about community empowerment in terms of education. Local governments only operate using the powers granted by law or directives from higher levels of government (Abdullah, 2016). Villages are a subsystem of local government, so it is only natural that Japan's villages should implement the applicable Village Law related to education.

Low Education Levels

Issues will be analyzed and included in the public policy agenda. Ultimately, some issues will be included in the policy agenda of policymakers (Winarno, 2016). Education is part of the SDGs for villages that must be achieved, but in Japan Village, the achievement is still low. Issues will first be included in the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes), and then priority issues will be included in the policy agenda.

Low Economic Status

Socioeconomic factors greatly influence the level of education achieved. The function of economics in education is to support the educational process (Pidarta, 2000). There is a correlation between socioeconomic conditions and educational attainment; the higher the socioeconomic level, the higher the educational attainment (Basrowi & Juariyah, 2010). This is consistent with an interview with the village secretary of Japan, who believes that economic well-being or income influences the educational attainment of the community in Japan Village.

Agenda Development

The issues that have been identified will be included in the agenda for determining public policy by policy makers (Winarno, 2016). In terms of the policies formulated and stipulated in the RPJMDes, the key is the Village Deliberation (Musdes) process, which involves all parties in the village; farmers' groups, religious

leaders, traditional leaders, representatives of artisan business groups, village youth representatives, women's representatives, representatives of poor groups, people with disabilities, and most strategically, the Village Consultative Body (BPD) (Noviani et al., 2023).

Community participation is a key factor in the success of government programs (Agustin & Rahayu, 2020). This is consistent with the results of the researcher's interviews with the Village Head of Japan, the Early Childhood Education Teacher, and Religious Leaders on January 3, 2024. Mr. Rudy Atmoko, the Village Head, stated that:

"Those involved in the formulation of this policy agenda include myself as the Village Head, village officials, the Village Council (BPD), community leaders, religious leaders, Quran teachers, early childhood education teachers, and kindergarten teachers."

Confirmed by Mr. Prihandoko, a member of the Japan Village Council, who mentioned that: *"The development of the village agenda related to education involves me as a member of the Village Council, the Village Head and village officials, the ustad in all hamlets, Quran teachers, PAUD and kindergarten teachers, and religious leaders."*

This was reinforced by Mrs. Nurul, a PAUD teacher in Japan Village, who said: *"Yes, I was involved in the agenda formulation; I attended the Musrenbangdes meeting."* Similarly, religious leader Mr. Tholkah Jamil also stated: *"In the annual Musrenbangdes meeting, we are always invited to discuss the work plan, budget, income, and expenditures for the following year."*

It can be concluded that the issues were responded to positively by the village government, followed by the formulation of a policy agenda in the field of education in Japan Village, involving the Village Head, Village Officials, BPD, Religious Leaders, Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education Teachers, and TPA Teachers from each hamlet.

Policy Formulation

The next stage is policy formulation. The policy formulation to be carried out by the government will certainly take into account the conditions on the ground regarding the issues occurring in the community, then formulate an agenda that focuses on the decisions to be made, which will then be formulated collectively. Policy problem formulation is an effort to formulate what the actual problems to be addressed are (Purnama et al., 2021). Policy formulation does not only contain the thoughts or opinions of leaders representing members, but also public opinion and public voice (Parson, 1997). For this policy to be implemented, a good and selective plan or formulation by the village government is needed so that the objectives of the policy can be achieved. To find out who was involved in the formulation of this village policy, the researcher then conducted interviews with the Village Head and the Japan Village Council on January 3, 2025.

The Village Head said that:

"This policy began in 2019, and its formulation was adjusted to address existing issues in the field of education. Those involved in the formulation of village regulations and the Japan Village Council included representatives from community leaders. Then all village institutions were also invited, starting from PKK cadres, Posyandu, Linmas representatives, RT/RW, Karangtaruna, and representatives of community leaders in the village."

The Japan Village Council also stated that: *"The formulation of policies involves not only the Village Council but also the community, represented by religious leaders in each hamlet, kindergarten/preschool teachers, and village officials."*

From the interview results, it was concluded that policy formulation is not only the responsibility of the village head but also involves BPD members, village officials, and community leaders.

Policy Approval

After formulation, the next stage in policy-making is policy approval, which gives it legal binding force. The policy-making process cannot be separated from the policy approval process. Policy approval is the process of collective adjustment and acceptance of recognized principles and accepted standards (Islamy, 2000). Village policies related to education in Japan Village are outlined in Village Regulation (PerDes) No. 2 of 2019 on the "Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget for Japan Village in 2020."

Based on observations from Japan village documents and interviews with the Village Head, Village Secretary on January 3, 2025, and the Japan Village Council on January 4, 2025. The Village Head of Japan said that: *"This policy was enacted five years ago, around 2019, by me, and has been re-enacted every year since then."* Confirmed by Mr. Sabar, the Village Secretary, who said: *"Actually, the Village Fund has been in place for quite some time, but we began focusing on it and re-enacting it five years ago in 2019."* This was further reinforced by Mr. Prihandoko, a member of the Village Council, who stated: *"This policy was first enacted in 2019, after Mr. Rudy was appointed as Village Head."*

The interview results can be summarized as follows: The Village Policy in the field of education was approved starting in 2019 by the Village Head of Japan. Every year, this policy is re-approved and remains in effect to this day.

Policy Implementation

The policy was not only formulated and then put into a positive form such as a law and then left untouched and not implemented. A policy must be implemented in order to have the desired impact and objectives. Policy implementation is an effort to achieve certain objectives with certain means and within a certain time frame (Pramono, 2020). After being approved by the Village Head, the policy was then implemented among the community. To confirm whether the policy in Japan

Village related to education was indeed implemented, after reviewing the village documentation, the researcher conducted interviews with the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teacher on January 3, 2025, the TPA teacher, and the head of the religious study group on January 4, 2025.

Mrs. Nurul, as a PAUD teacher, stated that: *"The Japan Village Government always pays attention by providing incentives for PAUD and kindergarten teachers, PAUD equipment such as uniforms, and competitions are also always supported with funding."*

Mr. Hartoko, as a TPA teacher and leader of the religious study group, also said that: *"Every year we receive incentives for Quran teachers from the village budget, usually distributed before Eid al-Fitr."* Mrs. Ika, as the leader of the religious study group, added that: *"Yes, we receive assistance from the village for our weekly religious study activities."*

Based on the interviews above, the researcher concluded that village policies in the field of education, including incentives for PAUD/TK teachers, incentives for TPA teachers, PAUD equipment (uniforms and laptops, refreshments for parent meetings), and assistance for majlis taklim events, have been implemented since they were passed and continue to this day.

Policy Evaluation

Policy evaluation is an effort to assess the differences in conditions before and after the policy is implemented (Purnama et al., 2021). Policy evaluation is the final stage of a policy that must be carried out. Policy evaluation is an effort to analyze and seek the truth about a program originating from the authorities through the substance/content of the program, its implementation, and its impact, so that it can provide objective and valid information about the achievement of a program in the policy. In evaluating a policy, several indicators must be used, namely effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and accuracy (Dunn, 2000). To determine the effectiveness of the implementation of village policies in the field of education, the researcher conducted interviews with the Village Head, the Village Secretary as the village government of Japan on January 3, 2025, and PAUD teachers and TPA teachers as the community receiving the policy on January 4, 2025.

The interview with the Village Head stated that: *"This policy is effective, even though the nominal incentive is still small, it can help improve the welfare of teachers. We will likely increase the amount next year."* Mr. Sabar, the Village Secretary, added that: *"Yes, this policy is effective because it has motivated teachers who receive incentives to teach more enthusiastically. Previously, they only taught after Maghrib prayers, but now they even teach after Ashar prayers, so the children in the village have an additional positive activity, which is learning to read the Quran."*

Confirmed again through an interview with the policy recipient, Mrs. Nurul, a preschool teacher: *“It is very effective because the operational funds at the school are still insufficient, especially given the economic conditions of the students, so the village funds are very helpful for school operations and teacher salaries.”*

This was reinforced by the interview with Mr. Hartoko, a TPA teacher who is a policy recipient, who stated that: *“This policy is very effective. Previously, education at the TPA was not prioritized, but now it is budgeted annually for TPA teacher incentives.”*

Based on the above interviews, the researcher concludes that the evaluation of village policies related to education conducted by the village government and community is effective for optimizing education in Japan Village. The village policy in the field of education in Japan Village is renewed annually, from 2019 to the present, and the budget allocation continues to increase.

Implications for Education

Improving the teaching spirit of educators

The world of education cannot be separated from the role of teachers, who are a very important human resource in a school organization. In creating human resources, teachers play a very important role in producing graduates with high-quality knowledge. The output produced by teachers in educating must be competent in all fields. A teacher's responsibilities are immense, as they shape the future of the nation by educating the next generation (Kunandar, 2018). Teachers are responsible for the development of their students, striving to nurture all their potential—psychomotor, cognitive, and affective. Therefore, this heavy responsibility deserves appropriate recognition by providing teachers with higher incomes through incentives (Syah et al., 2023). Yunita (2023) also noted in her research that providing incentives to teachers has a positive impact on their performance, particularly in terms of teaching enthusiasm. The incentives received by teachers will boost their work ethic, thereby improving the quality of their work and maximizing outcomes. In line with the results of the researcher's interview with the Village Secretary of Japan and Religious Leaders on January 3, 2025, the Village Secretary stated that:

“Teachers who receive incentives are more enthusiastic about teaching. Previously, they only taught after sunset, but now they even teach after afternoon prayers, so that children in the village have additional positive activities, namely learning to recite the Quran.”

Added by Mr. Tholkah Jamil, a religious figure, who stated that: *“With the provision of incentives for Quran teachers, their sense of responsibility increases, making them more enthusiastic about teaching.”*

It can be concluded that the provision of incentives for teachers as part of the village's policy in the political sphere has an impact on education, namely increasing

teachers' enthusiasm for teaching. Where enthusiasm for teaching can improve the quality of teachers' work in educating students.

Increasing students' enthusiasm for learning

After teachers receive incentives, their enthusiasm for teaching increases, which has a positive impact on their performance. Good teacher performance can foster students' enthusiasm and motivation to learn (Rani Febriyanni, 2023). In addition to teacher performance, adequate facilities and infrastructure also influence students' learning enthusiasm. This was confirmed by Mrs. Nurul, a PAUD teacher:

"There is an awareness among the community to send children to school from an early age, considering that the economic level of the village community is still low, and the village fund assistance has somewhat alleviated this, thereby increasing interest or awareness to send children to school from an early age."

The Village Head added that: *"With operational assistance to PAUD, students become enthusiastic about learning."* In terms of Islamic education, Mrs. Ika, as the head of the majlis tak'lim and TPQ teacher, said: *"This policy certainly has a positive impact; TPQ children are becoming more diligent in learning to recite the Quran."*

From the above interview, the researcher concluded that by improving the quality of teachers' work in educating after the introduction of teacher incentives and operational assistance for facilities and infrastructure, it can increase the enthusiasm of students in the Japan village environment.

Raising public awareness of the importance of education

The community is one of the informal educational institutions that plays a significant role in education. Given the importance of community awareness of education, it will certainly be one of the most important assets needed by children to continue their education to a higher level. This means that, in pursuing education, while internal factors (factors originating from within the child) are important, the primary challenge for children stems from external factors (factors originating from outside), particularly the awareness of society—especially parents or family members—regarding the importance of education. Awareness of education is understood as the presence of attitudes of knowing, understanding, realizing, and following up on the guidance process to develop an individual's potential into a strong human resource. The implementation of education is a shared responsibility among families, society, and the government (Saputri et al., 2023). The village government has been involved in efforts to improve education by issuing policies. With the village policies in place, the community feels that the government cares about them, leading them to recognize the importance of education and utilize these policies. This is consistent with the results of the researcher's interviews with the PAUD teacher on January 3, 2025, and the TPQ teacher on January 4, 2025.

Mr. Hartoko, the TPQ teacher, stated that: *“After this policy was implemented, the community felt that the village government cared about education, so they became involved in the form of community self-help.”*

This was confirmed by a statement from Ms. Ika, a preschool teacher, as follows:

“There is an awareness among the community to send their children to school at an early age, given that the economic level of the village community is still low. The village fund assistance has somewhat alleviated this, thereby increasing interest or awareness in sending children to school at an early age.”

Researchers can conclude that the village government's policy in the field of education can increase community awareness of education in Japan Village.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussions on the optimization of village government policies in strengthening education, it can be concluded that village policies in the field of education can take the form of incentives for educators, operational assistance, and infrastructure assistance. In this study, village policies have gone through the stages of problem identification, agenda setting, drafting, approval, implementation, and policy evaluation. The evaluation stage of the policy indicates that it effectively increases educators' enthusiasm for teaching, students' enthusiasm for learning, and raises community awareness of the importance of education. Optimizing village policies in the field of education in the form of infrastructure, through a proper process, can enhance the enthusiasm for learning and teaching.

Other researchers are encouraged to continue developing research related to village policies in the field of education, as this research can serve as a reference for village governments to actively participate in optimizing education.

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