

Evaluating the Implementation of Ministry of Agriculture Regulation No. 07 Of 2019 on Oil Palm Rejuvenation in Way Kanan Regency: Communication, Resource Management, and Policy Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation of Ministry of Agriculture Regulation No. 07 of 2019 concerning oil palm rejuvenation in Way Kanan Regency, focusing on communication effectiveness, resource management, and the overall success of the policy. The research identifies key challenges in communication, including inconsistent and limited outreach, which have hindered the policy's impact. Resource management issues are highlighted, particularly the shortage of trained extension workers and inadequate infrastructure, which have affected the program's effectiveness. Despite these challenges, the positive disposition of the implementation team and the established bureaucratic structure have contributed to some success in policy execution. The study underscores the need for improved communication strategies, enhanced resource allocation, and increased funding to address these issues and optimize policy implementation. The findings suggest that addressing these areas will be crucial for achieving the policy's objectives and ensuring its benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

Keywords: Policy Implementation; Oil Palm Rejuvenation; Communication Challenges; Resource Management; Agricultural Policy

Introduction

The economic landscape of Way Kanan Regency is significantly supported by the palm oil plantation sector, which represents a major component of the local economy. Although palm oil cultivation in Way Kanan has expanded in terms of area, its productivity and quality have not seen corresponding improvements. This region, a key supplier of Crude Palm Oil (CPO) in Lampung Province, boasts the second-largest palm oil plantation area after coffee, making it a pivotal sector in the region's agricultural economy. Despite its prominence, the productivity of smallholder oil palm plantations remains suboptimal, which is a pressing issue.

The low productivity in these plantations is attributed to several factors. These include the age of the palm trees, many of which are over 25 years old and thus less productive, the limited use of high-quality seeds, insufficient technical knowledge among smallholder farmers, and weak farmer institutions. Additionally, financial constraints exacerbate the problem. While the government has introduced various programs to address these issues, such as plantation revitalization and seed replacement programs, their impact has been limited. Farmers frequently report difficulties in obtaining quality seeds and lack adequate extension services to address cultivation challenges.

To address these issues, the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture issued Policy Number 07 of 2019, focusing on the rejuvenation of palm oil plantations as a means to enhance productivity and quality. This policy aims to address the identified gaps and improve the overall effectiveness of palm oil production (Adiprasetyo et al., 2019; Purba, 2019; Suroso et al., 2020). However, despite these efforts, the implementation of this policy has faced several hurdles, including suboptimal socialization of the program, limited human resources for program activities, and bureaucratic challenges (Marimin et al., 2020; Rosyani et al., 2019; Witjaksono et al., 2023).

This study aims to investigate the implementation of the Minister of Agriculture's Policy Number 07 of 2019 concerning the rejuvenation of smallholder palm oil plantations at the Way Kanan Regency Plantation Office.

Specifically, the objectives are: (1) to assess how the policy has been implemented to improve the productivity of smallholder oil palm plantations; (2) to identify the challenges hindering the effective implementation of the policy; and (3) to evaluate the steps taken by the Way Kanan Regency Plantation Office to enhance the program's effectiveness.

Understanding the implementation process and the associated challenges is crucial for refining policy and ensuring that revitalization efforts translate into tangible improvements in palm oil productivity and quality (Ghani et al., 2019). By analyzing these factors, this study contributes to a better understanding of policy implementation in the context of agricultural development and offers insights into potential improvements for future programs (Nainggolan et al., 2021; Yuslaini et al., 2023).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with an inductive analysis to explore the implementation of the Minister of Agriculture's Policy No. 07 of 2019 regarding the development of human resources and the rejuvenation of oil palm plantations. The rationale for using a qualitative method is to gain an in-depth understanding of the policy's practical application and the challenges faced during its implementation (Iskandar, 2022; Yanita et al., 2019). The research involves collecting data through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, documentation, and observation. In-depth interviews are conducted with eight informants, including members of the Way Kanan District Plantation Office, representatives from the Ministry of Forestry and Environmental Affairs, the National Land Agency, and local farmers. This method allows for detailed insights into the experiences and perspectives of those directly involved with or affected by the policy. Documentation involves reviewing relevant policy documents and records to contextualize the implementation process. Observation provides a firsthand look at how the policy is applied in practice at the Plantation Office. Data analysis follows a systematic process, including data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing (Rahim et al., 2023; Rodgers et al., 2018; Supianti & Ikhwan, 2023). Data reduction involves summarizing and organizing information to identify key themes and patterns. Data presentation is carried out by narrating the findings in a coherent manner that addresses the research questions. Finally, conclusion drawing involves verifying the results and formulating insights based on the data collected. This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the policy's implementation and its impact on the productivity and quality of smallholder oil palm plantations (Diana & Farida, 2023; Edison, 2020; Hariyadi et al., 2021).

Result and Discussion

a. Result

The implementation of the Ministry of Agriculture Regulation No. 07 of 2019 on oil palm rejuvenation in Way Kanan Regency reveals several key findings. Firstly, communication efforts have been less effective than anticipated. The primary issue identified is the inconsistency and limited reach of communication strategies. Despite plans for extensive outreach, including workshops and socialization sessions, logistical challenges and insufficient resources have hindered the program's effectiveness. Consequently, not all farmer groups have received adequate information about the policy, affecting their ability to engage with and implement the program fully.

Resource allocation has also posed significant challenges. The study highlights a critical shortage of trained extension workers relative to the number of farmer groups. This disparity has affected the quality and extent of support available to farmers. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure for mobility and operational support further exacerbates the issue, limiting the program's overall impact (Triana & Defrizal, 2024).

In terms of disposition, the attitude of the team responsible for implementing the policy has been largely positive. The team leader has provided clear and continuous guidance, which has facilitated effective communication with farmers. This positive disposition has been crucial in achieving the policy's objectives.

The bureaucratic structure supporting the policy implementation has generally been effective. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been established, and responsibilities have been clearly delegated among team members (Michaellim & Habiburahman, 2024). This structured approach has ensured that the policy is executed systematically and in accordance with established procedures. Supporting factors for the policy's implementation include the presence of a well-defined policy framework, competent personnel, government support, and farmer enthusiasm. However, several hindering factors have also been identified, such as a shortage of human resources, issues with land legality, difficult-to-access areas, and limited funding.

b. Discussion

The results of the study indicate that while the bureaucratic structure and team disposition have positively contributed to the implementation of the palm oil rejuvenation program in Way Kanan Regency, there remain significant challenges that must be addressed to improve the program's effectiveness. One key issue is the suboptimal communication of the policy to smallholder farmers. This finding is consistent with the observations of (Marimin et al., 2020; Witjaksono et al., 2023), who noted that inadequate program socialization has limited the reach and effectiveness of government initiatives. Enhancing communication strategies is essential to ensure that all stakeholders, particularly smallholder farmers, are fully informed and engaged. This could involve more comprehensive outreach efforts, as well as the improvement of logistical support to ensure that information is properly disseminated across all farmer groups.

Resource limitations also emerged as a critical challenge. The lack of trained extension workers, as highlighted by (Suroso et al., 2020), continues to be a significant barrier to the program's success. The shortage of human resources hampers the ability of the program to provide adequate technical assistance to farmers, a problem exacerbated by the financial constraints faced by both the government and farmers, as previously noted by (Rosyani et al., 2019). Addressing these resource gaps requires increased recruitment and training of extension personnel, as well as securing additional funding to support infrastructure development and mobility, which are essential for program operations.

Despite these challenges, the positive disposition of the implementation team stands out as a key strength. This mirrors the findings of (Rengifurwarin, 2022), who emphasized that motivated and well-supported teams play a crucial role in the successful execution of agricultural policies. Ensuring that the team remains well-supported and continues to receive clear guidance will be vital for maintaining momentum and ensuring the program's continued success.

Finally, the study underscores the effectiveness of the bureaucratic structure in supporting policy implementation, particularly the clarity of procedural guidelines and responsibility delegation. This finding is in line (Nainggolan et al., 2021), who argued that a structured approach is crucial for ensuring consistency and quality in policy execution. However, bureaucratic hurdles, such as those identified by (Witjaksono et al., 2023), must be addressed to streamline processes and enhance program efficiency.

In conclusion, while the palm oil rejuvenation program has made some progress, particularly in terms of team disposition and bureaucratic support, addressing the identified challenges—especially in communication and resource management—will be essential for the program to achieve its intended goals. Future efforts should focus on enhancing communication strategies and addressing resource gaps to ensure that the program delivers tangible benefits to smallholder palm oil farmers in Way Kanan Regency (Adiprasetyo et al., 2019; Purba, 2019; Yuslimani et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The implementation of the Ministry of Agriculture Regulation No. 07 of 2019 in Way Kanan Regency presents a mixed picture. While the bureaucratic structure and team disposition were strong points, communication and resource limitations were significant challenges. The study highlights the need for enhanced communication strategies, increased resources, and better infrastructure to optimize the implementation of the oil palm rejuvenation program. Future research could explore the impact of specific resource allocation strategies and the effectiveness of different communication approaches in similar policy contexts. The research underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to policy implementation that considers communication, resource availability, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging supporting factors, it is possible to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation and achieve better outcomes for the target population.

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