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Implementation of Government Policy in Addressing Junior High School (SMP) Dropouts in Pesisir Selatan Regency

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Abstract

Junior high school dropout remains a persistent structural challenge in Pesisir Selatan Regency. During the 2023–2024 academic year, the Department of Education and Culture recorded 1,663 junior high school dropouts, with a dropout rate of 0.07%, exceeding the rates reported in Padang City (0.03%), Solok Regency (0.008%), and Solok City (0.003%). This condition persists despite the implementation of several government initiatives, including the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Program, School Operational Assistance (BOS/BOSDA), the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP), and the 2021–2026 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). This study aimed to analyze the implementation of government policies, identify implementation constraints, and examine the measures undertaken to address junior high school dropout in Pesisir Selatan Regency. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Informants were purposively selected and included officials from the Junior High School Division of the Department of Education and Culture, school principals, guidance and counseling teachers, school dropouts, and parents from SMPN 9 Koto XI Tarusan, SMPN 3 IV Jurai, and SMPN 1 Batang Kapas. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and

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documentation, validated through source triangulation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The analysis was guided by George C. Edwards III's policy implementation framework, encompassing communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The findings indicate that the policies have been formally implemented, but their effectiveness is constrained by five interrelated factors: families' economic burdens, particularly indirect educational costs; inadequate communication regarding access to non-formal education pathways; inconsistent procedures for removing students from the Basic Education Data System (Dapodik); peer-group influence and early marriage; and limited parental involvement, which primarily results from economic constraints rather than parental neglect. In response, the local government, schools, and guidance and counseling teachers have redirected school dropouts to Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM), strengthened mentoring and home-visit programs, expanded educational assistance, and increased oversight of BOS fund utilization. The study concludes that reducing school dropout in high-risk regions requires the simultaneous strengthening of all four dimensions of Edwards III's policy implementation framework while ensuring that interventions remain responsive to local socioeconomic and cultural conditions. These findings contribute to educational policy implementation by demonstrating the need for integrated financial, administrative, communicative, and socio-cultural interventions to improve school retention.

Keywords: Educational Policy; Edwards III Framework; Junior High School Dropout; Policy Implementation; Pesisir Selatan Regency

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every Indonesian citizen, as mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and reaffirmed in Article 31 paragraph (4), which obliges the state to organize and implement a national education system to promote the intellectual development of the nation (Palguna & Atmaja, 2023). As a manifestation of this commitment, the government allocates at least 20 percent of the national budget (APBN) to the education sector and implements the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Program under Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, supported by the School Operational Assistance (BOS) program as stipulated in Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 76 of 2012. Nevertheless, school dropout remains a serious challenge that has not yet been fully resolved, with its causes becoming increasingly complex

and no longer attributable solely to economic factors (Purwatiningsih, 2024; Senowarsito et al., 2023).

In West Sumatra Province, school dropout rates increase with the level of education, reaching 0.45% at the elementary school level, 1.46% at the junior high school level, and 1.58% at the senior high school level. The province recorded 1,352 elementary school dropouts, 1,568 junior high school dropouts, and 907 senior high school dropouts. Although Pesisir Selatan Regency is relatively well served in terms of educational access, it has not been immune to this issue. Data from the Department of Education and Culture of Pesisir Selatan Regency indicate that 3,610 children were out of school in 2024, comprising 1,379 students categorized as Long-Term Non-Continuing (LTM) and 2,231 students classified as Dropouts (DO). At the junior high school level specifically, the number of school dropouts reached 1,663 students distributed across 15 sub-districts, with Lengayang Sub-district (197 students) and Koto XI Tarusan Sub-district (196 students) recording the highest numbers.

Data from the past five years reveal a trend that warrants careful attention. Although the absolute number of junior high school dropouts declined from 1,763 students in 2021 to 1,618 students in 2025, the dropout rate relative to total student enrollment peaked in 2023 (8.97%) because the number of enrolled students also declined sharply during the same period. Compared with other regions in West Sumatra during the 2024/2025 academic year, Pesisir Selatan Regency recorded both the highest number of dropouts (1,663 students) and the highest dropout rate (0.07%), substantially exceeding those of Padang City (974 students; 0.03%), Solok Regency (148 students; 0.008%), and Solok City (13 students; 0.003%). This disparity suggests that the dropout problem in Pesisir Selatan Regency is more structural than merely a reflection of annual statistical fluctuations and has the potential to hinder the region's long-term human resource development.

In response to this issue, the Government of Pesisir Selatan Regency has designated the reduction of school dropouts as a strategic regional development priority through Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2021 on the 2021–2026 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). This policy has been reinforced by the Regional School Operational Assistance (BOSDA) program, which addresses funding gaps not covered by the regular BOS program, as well as the Pessel Cerdas Program administered by the National Amil Zakat Agency (Baznas), which targets students from economically disadvantaged families. Nevertheless, the persistently high dropout rate indicates a possible gap between the policy

framework and its implementation in practice, particularly in terms of policy communication, resource limitations, implementers' disposition, and bureaucratic structure (Pemerintah Pesisirselatan, 2021).

Policy implementation constitutes the critical stage that determines whether a public policy achieves its intended objectives. According to Van Meter and Van Horn, policy implementation refers to the actions undertaken by individuals or groups within governmental and non-governmental organizations that are directed toward achieving the objectives established in policy decisions. George C. Edwards III further argues that successful policy implementation depends on four interrelated variables, namely communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure, all of which must be examined simultaneously to obtain a comprehensive understanding of implementation performance. Failures in implementation are frequently the dominant factor preventing policy objectives from being achieved, even when regulations and programs have been formally established.

Previous studies have examined the implementation of government policies in addressing school dropout issues across different contexts and regions. Research by (Manar, 2024) analyzed the implementation of the Mayo Sekolah policy in Wonosobo Regency as an effort to reduce the number of out-of-school children, emphasizing the importance of inter-agency coordination and community participation in ensuring program effectiveness. Research by (Yudha, 2024) investigated the implementation of the Bandung City Government's policy for addressing junior high school dropouts and found that policy effectiveness was influenced by inter-organizational coordination, resource availability, and the commitment of implementing agencies. Similarly, (Sari et al., 2021), in their study of the Indonesia Smart Card (KIP) program at MTsN 1 Watampone, concluded that the program contributed to improving educational access for students from low-income families, although its effectiveness depended on accurate beneficiary targeting and the intensity of public outreach. Meanwhile, (Purwatiningsih & Suprojo, 2024), in their evaluation of the implementation of Law No. 20 of 2003 in Malang City, found that addressing school dropout requires strong synergy among government institutions, schools, and the community to ensure effective policy implementation. In addition, (Kelen et al., 2022) demonstrated that the implementation of the Regional School Operational Assistance (BOSDA) policy in Malang City supported efforts to prevent school dropouts; however, its success remained

contingent upon adequate budget allocation, human resource capacity, and coordination among implementing organizations.

Although these studies share a common focus on educational policy implementation, they differ from the present study in terms of geographical setting, policy focus, and educational level. The distinct contribution of this study lies in its integrated examination of three major policy instruments within a single analytical framework: the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Program, the BOS and BOSDA programs, and the RPJMD together with regional educational assistance, all at the junior high school level in a regency characterized by a unique coastal and mountainous geographical landscape. This combination of policy instruments and contextual characteristics has rarely been investigated simultaneously in previous research. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze: (1) how government policies have been implemented to address junior high school dropouts in Pesisir Selatan Regency; (2) the challenges encountered in implementing these policies; and (3) the efforts undertaken by the local government, particularly the Department of Education and Culture, to overcome the problem of junior high school dropouts.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, which is intended to investigate, identify, describe, and explain the characteristics or distinctive features of social phenomena that cannot be adequately measured or explained through quantitative methods. Qualitative research is grounded in empirical field data, utilizes existing theories as explanatory frameworks, and seeks to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Moleong, 2021). In this study, the focus was on examining how government policies aimed at reducing junior high school (SMP) dropout rates have been implemented in practice, including the actors involved, the challenges encountered, and the strategies adopted during implementation.

The study was conducted over a five-month period, from May and June 2026. The research focused on the implementation of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Program, the School Operational Assistance (BOS) and Regional School Operational Assistance (BOSDA) programs, as well as regional education policies stipulated in the 2021–2026 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Pesisir Selatan Regency. The study

also examined the roles of key stakeholders, including the Department of Education and Culture, schools, teachers, parents, and the community. The research was carried out in Pesisir Selatan Regency, West Sumatra Province, with three public junior high schools selected as research sites because they are located in sub-districts with relatively high dropout rates: SMPN 9 Koto XI Tarusan (196 cases), SMPN 3 IV Jurai (167 cases), and SMPN 1 Batang Kapas (132 cases). These schools were purposively selected because they represent different yet complementary contextual characteristics. SMPN 9 Koto XI Tarusan is predominantly affected by geographical barriers and the economic conditions of fishing families; SMPN 3 IV Jurai faces greater challenges related to students' learning motivation and the influence of the social environment; whereas SMPN 1 Batang Kapas experiences a combination of economic hardship and less harmonious family conditions.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling and consisted of five categories: (1) officials from the Junior High School Division of the Department of Education and Culture of Pesisir Selatan Regency as key informants with comprehensive knowledge of government policies, programs, and implementation strategies; (2) principals of the three selected junior high schools who provided insights into policy implementation at the school level; (3) guidance and counseling (BK/BP) teachers or homeroom teachers who interacted directly with students; (4) junior high school dropouts as the primary beneficiaries and subjects affected by the policies; and (5) parents of school dropouts who provided perspectives on the economic, social, and cultural conditions of their families. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted between May and June 2026, complemented by a documentation study of statistical data, policy documents (Regional Regulations, RPJMD, BOS/BOSDA regulations), and reports on government and school programs.

Data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation, which involved comparing and cross-checking interview findings across different categories of informants including officials from the Department of Education and Culture, school principals, guidance and counseling teachers, school dropouts, and parents to enhance the credibility of the findings. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: (1) data reduction, involving the selection and simplification of information relevant to the research focus; (2) data display in the form of descriptive narratives; and (3) drawing and verifying conclusions by relating the empirical findings to George C. Edwards III's policy implementation framework, comprising the dimensions of

communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure, which served as the primary analytical framework. The discussion was further enriched by complementary theoretical perspectives, namely Lipsky's Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory to explain the behavior of frontline implementers, Becker's Human Capital Theory to interpret the economic rationale underlying household educational decisions, and Epstein's School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework to analyze parental involvement (Miles et al., 2022; Edwards III, 1980; Epstein, 2011).

RESULTS

a. Implementation of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy in Pesisir Selatan Regency has been carried out consistently across the schools included in this study. All participating schools have adhered to the principle of providing educational opportunities for every school-age child regardless of economic background, academic ability, or social circumstances. This policy reflects the schools' commitment to ensuring equitable access to education while fulfilling the government's mandate to guarantee that every child receives basic education. Its implementation has also been supported by teachers and educational staff who actively strive to retain students in school despite various challenges.

At the local government level, the implementation of the compulsory education policy has extended beyond student enrollment by incorporating various supporting programs aimed at improving educational quality. The Department of Education and Culture has implemented initiatives such as the Negeri Pandai and Negeri Mangaji programs, which focus on strengthening students' academic competence, character development, and personal potential. These initiatives demonstrate that policy implementation is not solely directed toward increasing school participation rates but also toward creating an educational environment that supports students' holistic development. The findings highlight the synergy between the local government and schools in implementing the compulsory education policy as an effort to reduce school dropout rates.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal that successful implementation of the compulsory education policy has not entirely eliminated the incidence of school dropout. Several factors

beyond the scope of education policy including household economic conditions, low learning motivation, and the influence of the social environment continue to prevent some students from completing junior high school education. Therefore, although the compulsory education policy has been implemented effectively in terms of administrative execution, its overall effectiveness remains influenced by external factors that require cross-sectoral interventions.

b. Implementation of the BOS and BOSDA Programs

The findings show that the School Operational Assistance (BOS) and Regional School Operational Assistance (BOSDA) programs have become the government's primary instruments for supporting educational services in Pesisir Selatan Regency. These funds are utilized to finance school operational expenses, procure teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure, support student development activities, and cover other expenditures related to the teaching and learning process. Through these programs, students are no longer required to bear core educational costs such as tuition fees and examination expenses, thereby reducing financial barriers to accessing education.

The implementation of BOS and BOSDA has also complied with the applicable regulations, resulting in relatively orderly fund management that corresponds to schools' operational needs. The findings indicate that all participating schools rely on these funds as their principal source of operational financing. In addition to supporting school operations, BOS has contributed to improving the quality of educational services by providing more adequate learning facilities and supporting a wide range of instructional activities.

Despite these positive contributions, the study found that BOS and BOSDA have not been sufficient to completely prevent school dropout. These assistance programs primarily reduce direct educational expenses, whereas families are still responsible for various indirect costs, including transportation, school uniforms, educational supplies, and daily allowances. This finding suggests that school dropout is influenced not only by formal educational costs covered by schools but also by households' economic capacity to meet the indirect expenses associated with children's daily educational needs.

c. Implementation of the RPJMD Policy and Social Assistance Programs (PIP and Baznas Pessel Cerdas)

The findings indicate that the implementation of the regional policy outlined in the 2021–2026 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Pesisir Selatan Regency

has been realized through several educational assistance programs, particularly the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP) and the Pessel Cerdas Program administered by the National Amil Zakat Agency (Baznas) of Pesisir Selatan Regency. These programs are designed to assist students from economically disadvantaged families in continuing their education. Financial assistance is distributed based on student data collected by schools and coordinated with the Department of Education and Culture to ensure that beneficiaries are selected according to their socioeconomic conditions.

According to the findings, the majority of students in the participating schools have received educational assistance through the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP), while students who have not been accommodated by the program receive support through the Baznas Pessel Cerdas Program. This condition reflects the local government's effort to broaden the coverage of educational assistance so that a greater number of students can benefit from financial support. This is illustrated by the following interview excerpts:

"Most students have received assistance through the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP), while those who have not yet received PIP assistance are supported through Baznas. The number of Baznas beneficiaries is determined according to the quota allocated to each school." (Mr. Tomi Desputra, S.Pd., Principal of SMPN 9 Koto XI Tarusan, interview, 5 June 2026)

"Out of approximately 500 students, around 365 receive educational assistance through PIP, while approximately 15 students receive assistance from Baznas." (Mr. Roni Sukri, S.Pd., Principal of SMPN 1 Batang Kapas, interview, 10 June 2026)

These statements indicate that the majority of students in the respective schools have benefited from the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP), while those who have not qualified for PIP assistance have been supported through the Baznas Pessel Cerdas Program. According to the informants, this complementary distribution mechanism has helped schools retain students and encourage them to continue their education. These findings suggest that the implementation of the RPJMD through educational assistance programs has been relatively effective. However, expanding the coverage of assistance and strengthening coordination among relevant stakeholders remain necessary to ensure that all eligible students gain access to these support programs.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of government policies to address junior high school (SMP) dropouts in Pesisir Selatan Regency demonstrates that the local government has undertaken various initiatives to ensure the fulfillment of citizens' right to education. These efforts have been realized through the implementation of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Program, the School Operational Assistance (BOS) program, the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP), the Pessel Cerdas Program administered by Baznas, and the provision of non-formal education through Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM). Collectively, these programs reflect the local government's commitment to reducing school dropout rates, particularly among students from economically disadvantaged families. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that policy implementation has not yet been able to completely eliminate school dropout, as it continues to be influenced by household economic conditions, the social environment, low learning motivation, and suboptimal parental involvement.

According to George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory, successful implementation is determined by four key variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure (Widodo, 2011). These variables are interrelated, meaning that weaknesses in one dimension can reduce the overall effectiveness of policy implementation. In this study, communication between the Department of Education and schools functioned relatively well through coordination meetings, supervision, and the dissemination of information regarding various educational programs. Schools also actively maintained communication with parents through homeroom teachers and guidance and counseling (BK) teachers whenever students were identified as being at risk of dropping out. These communication efforts included inviting parents to school, conducting home visits, and providing motivation to encourage students to continue their education.

Although communication among implementing organizations was generally effective, the findings reveal that information dissemination to the community remains inadequate. Many parents were still unaware of the availability of equivalency education through PKBM or the procedures for accessing educational assistance. Consequently, some families decided to discontinue their children's education because they believed that no educational alternatives were available after leaving formal schooling. This finding suggests that communication with the target population requires further strengthening to ensure that all community members understand the educational rights and opportunities provided by the

government. Edwards III argues that effective communication requires not only that policy information reaches implementers but also that it is clearly understood by the intended beneficiaries (Widodo, 2011).

In addition to communication, resources also significantly influence policy implementation. The findings show that the local government has provided substantial educational resources through BOS, PIP, and the Baznas Pessel Cerdas Program. These forms of assistance have reduced educational expenses, enabling most students to remain in school. At the school level, guidance and counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and principals constitute essential human resources responsible for identifying students at risk of dropping out and providing continuous support. Nevertheless, the limited economic capacity of many families means that the available assistance has not been sufficient to address all causes of school dropout, as households must still bear transportation costs, school supplies, uniforms, and other indirect educational expenses.

This condition can be explained through Becker's Human Capital Theory (1964), which views education as a long-term investment that enhances human capital and future economic well-being. However, families experiencing financial hardship often prioritize immediate economic needs over the long-term benefits of education. The findings indicate that some students left school in order to help their parents earn income or because they did not wish to become an additional financial burden on their families. This demonstrates that school dropout decisions are influenced not only by the availability of government assistance but also by the vulnerability of household economic conditions. These findings are consistent with the study by (Liu et al., 2021), which found that socioeconomic disadvantages significantly reduce educational investment, increase the likelihood of school dropout, and ultimately hinder children's human capital accumulation.

The disposition, or commitment of policy implementers, was also found to be relatively strong. Schools demonstrated a serious commitment to retaining students through various persuasive approaches. Teachers carried out responsibilities that extended beyond administrative duties by seeking to understand students' psychological and social conditions. These efforts included counseling, communication with parents, and home visits. Such commitment indicates that policy implementers possess a positive attitude toward achieving the policy objective of reducing school dropout and ensuring every child's right to education.

The role of guidance and counseling teachers and school principals is consistent with Lipsky's Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory. Lipsky argues that the success of public policy implementation ultimately depends on frontline implementers who interact directly with the public. In the context of this study, guidance and counseling teachers serve as key actors who translate government policies into concrete actions through mentoring, mediation with families, and motivational support for students. This finding is supported by (Tummers & Bekkers, 2014), who argue that successful public policy implementation largely depends on street-level bureaucrats because they possess the discretion to interpret and adapt policies according to the conditions of the communities they serve. Therefore, the quality of policy implementation is strongly influenced by the ability of school-level implementers to establish effective relationships with the community.

The bureaucratic structure supporting policy implementation was also found to function relatively well. The Department of Education, schools, Baznas, and the local government have established clear divisions of responsibility in implementing programs to address school dropout. Schools are responsible for collecting student data, the Department of Education coordinates policy implementation, and Baznas provides assistance to students who are not covered by central government programs. However, the findings also indicate that coordination with village governments and local communities remains suboptimal, particularly in identifying school dropouts and disseminating information regarding non-formal education opportunities. Consequently, some students who have already left school have not yet received the support appropriate to their needs.

These findings are consistent with those of (Purwatiningsih & Suprojo, 2024), who concluded that the implementation of policies addressing school dropout in Malang City is influenced by effective communication, inter-agency coordination, and the availability of implementation resources. Their study also found that educational assistance alone is insufficient to resolve school dropout because family socioeconomic conditions continue to influence educational continuity. Similar conclusions were reached by (Manar, 2024), who reported that the success of the "Mayo Sekolah" Program in Wonosobo Regency depended not only on government policies but also on active participation from local communities and village governments.

Similarly, (Sari et al., 2021) found that the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP) improved educational access for economically disadvantaged students; however, its effectiveness

depended heavily on accurate beneficiary targeting, effective public communication, and schools' capacity to provide assistance to recipients. Meanwhile, (Senowarsito et al., 2023) and (Pandu et al., 2022) identified household economic hardship, low learning motivation, and adverse social environments as the dominant causes of school dropout. These findings reinforce the results of the present study, confirming that school dropout is a multidimensional issue that cannot be resolved solely through financial assistance.

Beyond economic factors, the findings also reveal that limited parental involvement affects the effectiveness of policy implementation. Many parents were unable to provide adequate learning support or motivation because of work obligations or limited educational backgrounds. This finding is consistent with Epstein's School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework, which emphasizes that educational success depends on strong partnerships among schools, families, and communities. When one of these components functions inadequately, children's risk of experiencing learning difficulties and eventually dropping out of school increases. This finding is further supported by (Castro et al., 2015, Teuber et al., 2023) who demonstrated that parental involvement is positively associated with students' academic achievement and educational persistence because family support enhances learning motivation, student engagement, and reduces the likelihood of educational failure. Furthermore, (Boonk et al., 2018; Cosso et al., 2022) emphasized that consistent parental involvement, both academically and emotionally, is one of the key determinants of successful educational outcomes.

Overall, the implementation of government policies to address junior high school dropouts in Pesisir Selatan Regency has shown encouraging progress but has not yet achieved optimal effectiveness. Based on George C. Edwards III's policy implementation framework, the dimensions of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure have generally functioned well; however, several challenges continue to hinder the achievement of policy objectives. These challenges include household economic constraints, limited public awareness of educational programs, and insufficient collaboration among government agencies, schools, families, and communities. Therefore, the local government should strengthen cross-sectoral coordination, expand the dissemination of educational programs, enhance the capacity of school-level implementers, and provide broader support to economically disadvantaged families in order to improve policy implementation and more effectively reduce junior high school dropout rates.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of government policies to address junior high school (SMP) dropouts in Pesisir Selatan Regency has been carried out through the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Program, the distribution of School Operational Assistance (BOS) and Regional School Operational Assistance (BOSDA) funds, the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP), guidance and counseling services, home visit activities, and coordination between schools and the Department of Education. Based on George C. Edwards III's policy implementation framework, communication has functioned relatively well between the Department of Education and schools, although it remains less effective in reaching parents and communities, particularly regarding information on non-formal education pathways. The resource dimension shows that BOS and PIP have reduced students' educational expenses, yet these programs have not fully covered indirect educational costs and have been further affected by the discontinuation of BOSDA funding. The disposition dimension reflects the strong commitment of school principals, teachers, and guidance counselors to retaining students through mentoring, counseling, and home visits, despite inconsistencies in the implementation of student withdrawal procedures. The bureaucratic structure demonstrates a clear distribution of responsibilities among the Department of Education, schools, and other institutions; however, stronger cross-sectoral coordination and more standardized operational procedures are still required. The implementation process continues to face several interconnected challenges, including household economic hardship, inadequate communication regarding non-formal education opportunities, inconsistencies in Dapodik administrative procedures, the influence of peer environments and early marriage, and limited parental involvement resulting primarily from financial and time constraints. To address these issues, the local government and schools have redirected school dropouts to Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM), strengthened guidance and counseling services and home visits, expanded educational assistance through PIP and the Baznas Pessel Cerdas Program, and improved the monitoring of BOS fund utilization through a digital reporting system. Overall, the implementation of these policies demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to reducing school dropout rates in Pesisir Selatan Regency. Nevertheless, its effectiveness remains limited because school dropout is a multidimensional issue that requires integrated policy implementation, strengthened collaboration among stakeholders, and greater attention to the local social, economic, and cultural context.

This study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of educational policy implementation. From a theoretical perspective, it extends the application of George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory to the context of addressing school dropout by demonstrating that the four implementation dimensions are closely interconnected and influenced by the social, economic, and cultural conditions of society. From a practical perspective, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting successful policy implementation while identifying the major challenges encountered by local governments, schools, and families. The findings are expected to serve as a valuable reference for the Government of Pesisir Selatan Regency, the Department of Education, and educational institutions in formulating more effective strategies to reduce school dropout rates through strengthened inter-agency coordination, expanded access to educational assistance, improved dissemination of information regarding non-formal education, and greater empowerment of families and communities.

Future research is recommended to expand the investigation of school dropout policy implementation by employing broader methodological approaches, such as mixed methods or comparative studies across regions, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of policy effectiveness under different regional characteristics. In addition, future studies should explore in greater depth the influence of social, cultural, and psychological factors on students' decisions to leave school, including the effectiveness of non-formal education programs, the involvement of nagari (village) governments, and the role of cross-sectoral collaboration in reducing school dropout rates. Such studies are expected to further enrich the development of policy implementation theory while providing an evidence-based foundation for designing educational policies that are more adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable.

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