

Retrospective Evaluation of the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions in Ambon City

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Abstract: *This study aims to evaluate the implementation of policies regarding the imposition of community activity restrictions during the pandemic in Ambon City. The method used in this research is qualitative-descriptive with a retrospective policy analysis approach. The research results indicate that the implementation of community activity restrictions in Ambon City is not fully effective due to the mismatch between on-ground implementation and the regulations set by the government. Restrictions on community activities that impact the reduction of human contact intensity in public spaces and the use of masks are not new, and humans have endeavoured to implement these measures when dealing with similar cases like the Spanish Flu and COVID-19 in two different periods. Observing the repeating patterns of major cases that are highly likely to occur again in the future, the model of implementing restrictions on community activities, with its refinements, can be considered an example of controlling emergency problems of epidemic outbreaks and other health disasters with rapid spread and highly destructive impacts.*

Keywords: Policy, Evaluation, Implementation, Ambon City

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Introduction

Ambon City ranks second in population density in Maluku Province, with a total of 347.28 thousand people (18.78%), following Maluku Tengah with a population of 423.094 thousand (22.88%). These two areas serve as population centers in Maluku Province. Despite being in second place, Ambon City is the most densely populated area in Maluku Province due to its small size (359.4 km²) but densely inhabited by many individuals, with a population density of 1,163 people per square kilometer.

With the concentration of the population centered in Ambon as the provincial capital, its economic activities have also become the most advanced among other regions in Maluku Province. The economic growth imbalance between regions in Maluku Province needs to be addressed by creating and stimulating new economic areas in each district and city within the province. This approach can be directed towards encouraging residents to remain active and develop their respective regions, thereby preventing them from migrating to Ambon or outside the Maluku region.

This situation quickly changed when the spread of the COVID-19 virus was detected in the city of Ambon, brought by workers coming from Java Island, numbering approximately 7-8 cases. As it developed, Ambon City, according to Astuty (2020), was once in the red zone due to the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the Maluku Province. In 2020, the number of COVID-19 patients in Ambon City reached 3,939, with 3,413 recoveries and 49 deaths (Sihasale, 2021). However, like other regions in Indonesia, Ambon City experienced fluctuations in COVID-19 cases, so it was not always in the red zone. The concentration of the highest number

of COVID-19 cases in Ambon City is likely due to the high population density in the area, which is relevant to the number of COVID-19 cases (Rocklöv & Sjödin, 2020). The assumption is that the denser the population in an area, the higher the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission due to the increased frequency of human encounters or interactions.

In an effort to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission, the Indonesian government implemented policies to restrict human movement. During the pandemic, there were two major restrictions on human movement imposed by the Indonesian government, namely the large-scale social restrictions (PSBB), which later transformed into the enforcement of community activity restrictions (PPKM) following a surge in cases across Indonesia. PPKM is a policy aimed at limiting community mobility, reducing crowded activities, minimizing gatherings, tightening health protocols, imposing travel restrictions between regions, and reducing public services, with the hope of preventing the further spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia.

The city of Ambon, like other cities in Indonesia, is also affected by this social restriction policy. Agustino (2020) analyzed that the weak control over COVID-19 management in Indonesia is due to the lack of coordination among stakeholders, particularly the mismatch in mission and control practices between the central and local governments. The most noticeable impact of the social restrictions on the community is the drastic decline in large-scale economic activities, which leads to a decrease in purchasing power. There is also concern about the risk of food vulnerability in certain areas, especially due to limited social access and the distribution of food to impoverished

households (Susniwati & Kurhayadi, 2023). In such circumstances, according to Mawar et al. (2021), people prioritize meeting their primary needs and food over secondary and tertiary needs, resulting in a significant decrease in individual savings efforts.

The city of Ambon serves as the economic, educational, and cultural center of Maluku Province. This status has attracted residents from nearby islands such as Haruku and Saparua, making Ambon a destination for migration. The influx of people is driven by significant opportunities for newcomers to enhance their personal development and improve their family's economic conditions. Additionally, Ambon is a focal point for various international festivals and events, including the Timba Laor Festival, the Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Yacht Race, the Pacific Music Conference, and the Pela Gandong Festival.

The situation changed drastically when Ambon City implemented the Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities (PPKM), causing the overall economy of the city to experience significant fluctuations. For example, in 2021, Ambon City, along with Tual City, faced inflation rates of 4.05% and 3.45%, respectively. Ambon's inflation exceeded that of the Maluku Province (4.01%) and the national average (1.87%), with the largest expenditure contributing to inflation coming from the categories of food, beverages, tobacco, and transportation (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

On the other hand, social restrictions led to a sharp decline in the tourism target of 12,016 visits, only realizing 1,016 visits in 2020. A decrease in tourism also occurred in organized tourism events, where the number of visitors dropped from 6,696 in 2019 to 3,000 in 2020 due to event

postponements. The dimming of cultural and tourism attractions resulted in job losses for workers in this sector (Sihasale, C.J., 2021; Solemede et al., 2020). According to Oelistina (2021), this has impacted the tourism industry, including hospitality facilities, restaurants, creative economy businesses, and transportation.

Various studies by Indonesian researchers reveal that the implementation of emergency community activity restrictions negatively impacted the economic and physical resilience of family merchant households in Kebumen (Nuraeny et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Hadiwardoyo (2020) highlighted how the restriction of community activities posed difficulties at the national level, urging the government to create policies to restore the situation, thereby improving economic resilience at both individual and corporate levels.

Khairiyah's study (2022), based on the concept of a welfare society, reveals that the implementation of the PPKM policy has not been able to ensure a balance between efforts to safeguard public health and the economy. The PPKM policy, which has undergone several terminology changes during its development, has not been effectively executed due to weak legal foundations. Consequently, this has led to ineffective enforcement of sanctions and an uneven distribution of government responsibilities. Thus, according to Khiriyah, the PPKM policy during the pandemic has not implemented the concept of a welfare society.

Tuti, R., et al. (2020) argue that the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policies overlaps, as local governments like Bogor Regency have not gained full autonomy to regulate policies freely due to a significant central government influence. On the other hand,

there are equally important issues such as inadequate public and influencer education, insufficient private sector involvement in PSBB execution, the necessity for equitable distribution of social assistance to affected communities, and weak enforcement of sanctions against policy violations. Furthermore, Nicola et al. (2020) state that restrictions on community activities have resulted in a reduction of the workforce across various sectors and the elimination of many jobs. Therefore, Fhatoni (2020) argues that if the PPKM is enforced for an extended period, MSME operators will experience income deficits.

The massive spread of COVID-19 in Maluku Province is due to the implementation of policies by various parties in the province that have not been fully carried out in the field. This situation is caused by several factors, such as: (1) the lack of widespread awareness among the public about the danger of COVID-19, with many still not believing in or acknowledging its existence; (2) law enforcement agencies have not been able to take firm actions on the ground, as their approach has been predominantly advisory and awareness-raising; (3) the lack of synergy among all relevant components or stakeholders in preventive efforts and the handling of COVID-19 patients; and (4) the lack of awareness among citizens, including feelings of embarrassment or fear in seeking healthcare at health centers or hospitals when experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, and sneezing.

Considering the facts presented in the explanation above, the COVID-19 pandemic, as a health-issue phenomenon, has evolved significantly into a multisectoral crisis. The implementation of the PPKM policy is intended to be a solution for addressing the spread of

COVID-19. However, in reality, this policy is not yet fully ideal and effective, given the numerous shortcomings in its execution that need to be addressed. Therefore, the implementation of this policy needs to be evaluated to serve as learning material in the future for executing policies, especially during emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to provide clarity and make the public feel fully safeguarded by the measures undertaken by the government.

Mustopadidjaja (2003:46) explains that public policy evaluation is a component within the process of public policy. In simple terms, policy evaluation is an activity aimed at assessing the success and failures of a policy. In policy analysis, policy evaluation is often misinterpreted as a factual demand production rather than an evaluative demand (Bardach, E., 2008). Hence, according to Nugroho (2009), public policies cannot be left untouched. Policies must be controlled, and policy evaluation serves as that control tool.

Subarsono (2005) categorizes the assessment of public policies into two categories: the assessment of ongoing public policies (monitoring) and the assessment of completed policies (evaluation). Furthermore, Subarsono elaborates that evaluation activities have six objectives, including: (1) determining the level of policy performance; (2) measuring the level of policy efficiency; (3) measuring the level of outcomes; (4) measuring the impact of a policy; (5) identifying possible deviations; and (6) obtaining input for future policy-making.

Dunn, W.N. (2008) elaborated on the existence of four types of formal evaluations that can be employed to assess program implementation, namely: (1) developmental evaluation; (2) retrospective process evaluation; (3)

experimental evaluation; and (4) retrospective outcome evaluation.

Considering the above-mentioned types of evaluation by Dunn, the author chose retrospective process evaluation for this research. Retrospective process evaluation assesses programs after their implementation within a specific timeframe. This type of evaluation tends to focus on the issues and constraints that arise during policy implementation, related to the outcomes and impacts it produces. This evaluation does not allow for direct manipulation of inputs or processes.

Retrospective process evaluation is deemed relevant for assessing the Ambon City PPKM policy that has been concluded since January 2021. The purpose of this retrospective process evaluation is to holistically depict the implementation of the PPKM policy in Ambon City.

Method

The researcher employs a qualitative descriptive research method with a retrospective policy analysis approach in the study of the policy implementation of restricting community activities in the city of Ambon, Maluku Province. Retrospective process evaluation assesses programs after their implementation within a specific timeframe. This type of evaluation tends to focus on the issues and constraints that arise during policy implementation, related to the outcomes and impacts it produces (Dunn, W.N., 2008). Meanwhile, qualitative research, as defined by Moleong (2002), generates descriptive data obtained from written and oral sources or from the form of policy action. In this study, data sources are obtained through tracing research conducted by other authors published in journals, books, local and national online media

sources, documents of the central and regional government's policy on community activity restrictions (PPKM), interviews, observations, and interviews with community figures, academics, students, task force implementers, and health department representatives.

Results and Discussions

Chronology of the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) in Ambon City

Since the emergence of COVID-19 in Indonesia and its rapid and extensive spread, the Indonesian government has pursued a different approach compared to other affected countries like China in managing the handling of COVID-19 transmission. Considering various consequences, the Indonesian government opted for implementing social restrictions on the community rather than enforcing a lockdown or attempting to tightly restrict the movement of people either within or outside Indonesian territory. The rationale behind this approach was primarily to support individuals who rely on daily wages for their income. The social restrictions involve implementing guidelines for all citizens to work from home, learn from home, and worship from home while prohibiting gatherings and avoiding crowds (Kurniasih, 2020; Haleem et al., 2020).

Unlike the regions of Java Island and Bali Island, initially, the implementation of community activity restrictions in Ambon City and Maluku Province in general was not necessary due to the geographical distance of Maluku Province's island location, which is quite far from the COVID-19 distribution zones (Java and Bali). However, after waves of community mobility from Java Island reached Maluku, COVID-19 cases began to

be detected in Maluku Province starting in March 2020. Ambon City first implemented PPKM on June 24, 2021, with the issuance of Mayor of Ambon Instruction Number 1 of 2021, and it continued until January 2023, covering all areas in Indonesia, through the Ministry of Home Affairs Instruction (Mendagri) Number 53 of 2022 dated December 30, 2022, marking the transition period from pandemic to endemic conditions. Before the implementation of PPKM, Ambon City had previously enforced Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) starting on June 22, 2020, which lasted until June 2021. Following the initial implementation of PPKM, throughout the pandemic, the Ambon City Government issued 27 Mayor's Instructions in response to the President's directives through the Ministry of Home Affairs Instructions.

In principle, policy implementation is a dynamic process, involving policy implementers engaging in activities aimed at achieving desired outcomes based on the objectives of the policy that has been formulated (Agustino, 2008). At a certain level, policy implementation becomes more urgent compared to the policy itself, as the policy is still in the form of a plan or an idea (Udoji, 1981).

Herin's report (2020) revealed that starting in March 2020, low-income residents of Ambon began to lose their income, making it difficult for them to meet basic needs and face food insecurity. As time went on, in 2021, the people of Ambon started receiving their first social assistance in the form of 10 kilograms of rice for those affected by micro-scale PPKM (Patty, 2021).

On the other hand, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which are one of the pillars of Ambon's economy, experienced fluctuating growth during the pandemic. In Indonesia, MSMEs are a

crucial aspect of the economy as they are able to absorb 90% of the workforce (Pratama et al., 2021). However, since the implementation of the PPKM (Community Activity Restrictions), MSMEs have been facing their toughest period. According to Wren and Lewis (2020), MSMEs contribute significantly to employment in the labor market, accounting for approximately 97% of the total workforce and 99% of job fields. Furthermore, Baldwin et al. (2020) propose that the policy of implementing social restrictions leads companies to achieve effectiveness by reducing production activities, resulting in layoffs. Individuals who are affected by these layoffs automatically become unemployed, leading to a decrease in purchasing power and ultimately impacting the state's tax revenue. This viewpoint is supported by data from the Ministry of Manpower (cited in Mawar et al., 2021), which states that 85% of workers were laid off due to the impact of the PPKM on their respective companies or workplaces. Many of these workers were employed in the manufacturing, tourism, and transportation sectors.

The people of Ambon, like the people in other regions of Indonesia, experienced shock with the phenomenon of COVID-19 and the implementation of community activity restrictions. The shock, driven by a sudden, uncertain, and uncontrollable situation, has shaken the foundations of the people's lives in Ambon. This has prompted every Ambonese to adapt to all the new patterns and habits. However, not all adaptation efforts have been successful, especially when it comes to the implementation of regulations that directly impact the community. For example, Carteni et al. (2020) argue that if a region experiences an increase in COVID-19 cases, it is likely due to the low compliance of the community with the

restrictions. Meanwhile, Ristyawati (2020) highlights that the ineffectiveness of PPKM implementation is caused by the public's concern about the government's lack of attention to protect them from legal consequences resulting from the enforcement of PPKM policies.

Retrospective Evaluation of PPKM Policy Implementation

Retrospective evaluation is an assessment or monitoring of a program after it has been implemented over a specific period of time. This type of evaluation tends to focus on the problems and constraints that occurred during policy implementation, which are related to the outputs and impacts produced (Dunn, 2008). In this study, the evaluation is directed towards the implementation of the PPKM policy in Ambon City throughout the years 2021–2022. To narrow down the evaluation of this policy, the researcher employs Edward III's theory (in Nawawi, 2009) as a guideline to assess the extent of the success of PPKM policy implementation in Ambon City, or conversely, if it indicates otherwise. This evaluation will target the following factors:

1. Communication Factors

Communication is crucial in any policy, as without effective communication, a policy is unlikely to be accepted by the general public as its intended objective. Agustino (2006) views communication as a critical variable in achieving the success of public policy objectives. In this context, appropriate public policy communication will drive the effective implementation of public policy.

The Ambon City Government, through several Mayor of Ambon Instructions, has conducted socialization with the entire

population through various available media, including print, electronic, and digital media. This socialization, supported by information technology and information channels, has, in reality, not been able to reach certain segments of the population. There are still certain segments of society who have not, or even never, heard about the policy. This is particularly the case among lower-class communities working in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. In general, they have heard of Micro PPKM or PPKM Level 3, but they do not comprehend the purpose and content, let alone the differences or changes in substance among various PPKM policies. This situation certainly contributes to the lower awareness of some members of the community regarding the implementation of the PPKM policy. Violations and non-compliance by certain segments of the Ambon City population towards the PPKM policy are partly influenced by this factor.

Another example of the existing weaknesses in public communication regarding the PPKM policy by the Ambon City Government is related to the gap in public understanding of the emergency PPKM. In 2021, for instance, the residents of Ambon City received conflicting information regarding the implementation of Emergency PPKM in their city. According to Joy (in McAmbon, 2021), this indicates that the public didn't have a comprehensive understanding of the regulations set by the central government regarding this type of PPKM. In reality, Ambon City, along with other cities in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua, only entered the Micro PPKM zone, which was tightened, even though there

were also cities in those islands designated under Emergency PPKM. However, in the researcher's view, the residents of Ambon City cannot be fully blamed, as all PPKM rules are relatively new to their lives, requiring adaptation. Additionally, the excessive use of terms by the government has confused the public's understanding. This implies that urging the public to understand all the technical explanations within the government-issued regulations is a rather rigid strategy from the implementing officers on the field.

Hadi and Gandryani (2022), using Fuller's theory (Eight Ways to Fail to Make a Law), suggest six failures in pandemic handling regulations since the early stages of policy implementation. These failures generally stem from regulations overlapping, challenging conditions, gaps in technical regulations, regulations governing quarantine, and the like.

In the case of the misunderstanding among Ambon City residents regarding Micro PPKM, PPKM Level 3, and Emergency PPKM, it's because these three determining factors for effective communication, as elucidated by Edward, haven't been adequately fulfilled. Therefore, it's essential to ensure that before policies are communicated to the public, officials and government personnel must have a proper understanding of the policies they create.

2. Resource Factors

The success and effectiveness of policy implementation greatly depend on resources. No matter how well-crafted a policy is, if the resources are insufficient, stumbling blocks in its

implementation will arise. Resource support can take the form of human resources, budgetary resources, equipment resources, information resources, and authority.

The implementation of PPKM policies in Ambon City has been carried out by a task force (satgas) involving the city government apparatus, which includes various elements of regional apparatus organizations (OPD), including the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP). In its execution, they are aided by personnel from the Indonesian National Defense Forces (TNI) and Indonesian National Police (POLRI) units, as well as behavior change ambassadors. Ambon City has 375 behavior change ambassadors assigned to curb the spread of COVID-19, working alongside the Population and Family Planning Control Agency and police officers spread across five districts. In terms of funding, Ambon City Government has allocated approximately 3.6 billion taken from APBD to all neighborhoods, with varying allocations for each neighborhood based on its geographical area (Mayaut, 2021).

The resources mobilized by the Ambon City government during the pandemic have indeed managed to curb the spread of COVID-19. However, the task force and personnel on duty still encounter violations in public spaces, such as street vendors and nighttime culinary sellers operating beyond the government-imposed operational hours, exceeding passenger limits in public transport, and even ignoring repeated requests from the task force to cease business activities in Mardika Market due to disregarding the restricted

operational hours. The economic sector has indeed received special consideration during the pandemic as it is connected to the livelihood of many. During periods of reduced PPKM levels in Ambon City, the economic sector consistently receives priority for relaxation.

3. Disposition Factor

The attitudes, character, and discipline of policy implementers are crucial factors that significantly determine the success of policy implementation. To what extent are the attitude, behavior, character, and discipline displayed by the Ambon City COVID-19 task force officers in enforcing the PPKM policy rules influenced by their understanding of the PPKM regulations themselves, as well as their loyalty and dedication to humanity and the Ambon City community in particular?

In relation to this, according to the researcher's observations, not all field officers fully comprehend the complete contents of the PPKM regulations. This is due to the constant changes in the PPKM regulations to adapt to the evolving conditions of COVID-19. Even before PPKM, there was the Large-Scale Social Restriction (PSBB) policy. This has also led to confusion in understanding each of these regulations, resulting in inconsistencies in their enforcement in the field and even haphazardness. The reality on the ground is that officers only appear during certain hours, such as approaching the closing time of shopping centers, restaurants, and markets. The same applies to public transportation operations and travelers entering and leaving Ambon City. Stringent measures only

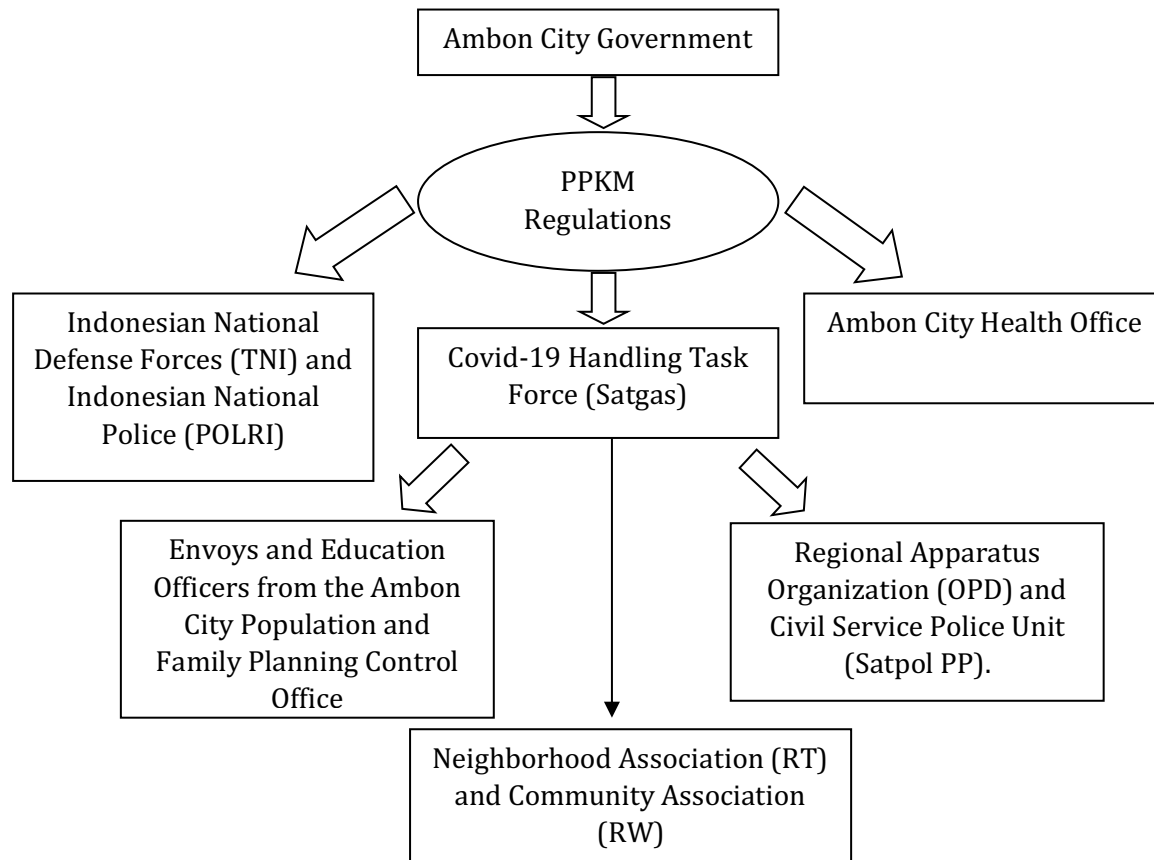
occurred during the initial weeks of the Micro PPKM and Level 3 PPKM implementations, but afterwards, monitoring became lax.

Besides the aforementioned reality, another issue is the lack of understanding of the PPKM policy rules, which contributes to procedural errors during actions in the field. For example, some officers may act excessively toward violators of health protocols or travelers. Another phenomenon related to the communication factor in the COVID-19 pandemic era is the rampant spread of fake news (hoaxes), which has led to distrust of the government as it is considered to be fabricating information regarding COVID-19. Consequently, some members of the community become non-compliant with the health protocol regulations implemented or recommended by the government.

4. Bureaucratic Structure

The bureaucratic structure is an entity that is most often involved in the overall implementation of policies. The organizational structure responsible for policy implementation significantly influences its execution. Within the bureaucratic structure, there are two important aspects that influence it. One of them is the aspect of bureaucratic structure that is important in every organization: the presence of standard operating procedures (SOP). These SOPs serve as guidelines for policy implementers to act on or carry out their tasks. Apart from SOPs, another factor influencing the bureaucratic structure is external fragmentation originating from outside the organization.

Figure 1. Bureaucratic Structure of the Implementation of PPKM in Ambon City



Source: Compiled by the author

The technical implementation of PPKM rules is carried out by the COVID-19 handling task force, assisted by the TNI and POLRI, as well as the relevant Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) that oversee neighborhoods and villages. Meanwhile, the Ambon City Health Department focuses on treating patients in hospitals. This bureaucratic structure showcases the COVID-19 handling bodies in Ambon City, which work in a relatively simple manner, enhancing effective coordination between the parties.

Throughout the pandemic, the Ambon City COVID-19 task force has implemented various programs to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases. These include conducting yustisi operations in

each district using persuasive methods and distributing leaflets containing the mayor's instructions about PPKM rules with the hope of raising public awareness about the dangers of the COVID-19 spread (Mayaut, 2022). Furthermore, the COVID task force is aided by behavior change ambassadors who share a similar mission. Apart from the Yustisi program, the Covid-19 task force also initiated the "Sorong Bahu Bantu Bantu Susahku (Sobatku) Ayo Balanja" program, a social movement to support and purchase goods from street vendors (PKL) (McAmbon, 2021). The COVID-19 task force has the authority to enforce health protocol violations.

A common issue encountered in the implementation of enforcement in the

field is the excessive use of authority beyond limits, driven by an overly emotional approach. Ideally, enforcement against undisciplined individuals should be flexible and adaptable to the situation. An example of this can be traced in Ambon City from a viral video depicting the COVID-19 task force conducting enforcement and social sanctions against fish sellers (papalele) passing through the Slamet Riyadi Port in Ambon. The enforcement was perceived by the public as unjustified due to its display of arrogance. Consequently, the involved task force personnel were suspended and subjected to retraining.

In Blass's perspective (in Hartono, 2006), compliance is closely tied to beliefs, acceptance, and the act of practicing. Compliance is achieved when an individual can trust the given instructions and believe that the person issuing those commands indeed holds the authority to do so. When people believe in the instructions and the authority figure, they accept the instructions and ultimately act in accordance with them, thus creating compliance.

Unlike lockdown, the PPKM model still provides flexibility for the community to engage in outdoor activities with guidelines set by the government. Lockdowns, correctly implemented in many cases in various countries, have proven successful in mitigating the peak of pandemic cases by controlling the number of patients that could exceed hospital capacity. Meanwhile, PPKM, besides flattening the number of exposed and hospitalized cases, can maintain the economic activities of the community on a smaller scale compared to normal conditions. This model is relevant for addressing extraordinary non-natural disasters like pandemics that can spread through social and physical contact. In

cases such as COVID-19, the Spanish Flu, and several pandemics in the past, the implementation of restrictions on community activities or lockdowns requires significant costs as it would "shut down" various community activities, but the benefits can provide a higher life expectancy. Influenza and other health issues seem to pose a global challenge as the human life ecosystem has changed drastically and human growth is massive in this century, with the main concentration being in urban areas (Oraby, T. et al., 2021; Yanovskiy & Socol, 2022). This concentration of communities needs attention from the government through various tools, reflecting COVID-19. In communities with high population concentrations, virus spread is massive due to the distances between humans. In other words, the government needs to control this community concentration while periodically providing health education to maintain cleanliness and promote a decent life.

Conclusions

PPKM is a pandemic control model implemented by the Indonesian Government, taking into account health, economic, and educational consequences. This policy model is entirely different from lockdowns enforced in various countries, which completely restrict human movement out of the country. PPKM can be used as a model for controlling community activities in health emergencies such as Covid-19 or the Spanish Flu, which spread through physical contact between humans through the air. It is not impossible that similar cases may occur again in the future, possibly on a more dangerous scale. Through the experience of implementing PPKM in Ambon City, what needs to be well prepared is the initial mapping of the

virus spread, its effects, and the appropriate handling measures. Incorrect initial mapping creates confusing information, undermining public trust in the government, and this can trigger an outbreak of cases in the community.

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