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THE EFFECTS OF GOVERNANCE AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN INDONESIA

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Abstract. The existing literature has predominantly focused on exploring how governance affects objective poverty measures; however, this study goes beyond by considering subjective poverty at the grassroots level, specifically in rural areas. Empirical analysis employing probit methodologies uncovers a positive and statistically significant correlation between governance quality and poverty. Notably, participation, accountability, public administration procedures, and e-government initiatives positively influence poverty levels. These findings highlight the importance of governance in improving the income and well-being of rural households. Furthermore, the study reveals that good governance practices have a positive impact on reducing the likelihood of poverty in rural areas, particularly among impoverished segments of rural communities. These results support the notion of a causal relationship between good governance and objective poverty, and shed light on the effects on subjective poverty. The study suggests several potential mechanisms through which this influence occurs, including the enhancement of e-government, participation, public administration procedures, and accountability. Districts with stronger village governance exhibit higher levels of participation and more effective decision-making processes that contribute to overall prosperity.

Keywords: good governance; poverty; developing countries; rural areas; Indonesia. **Reikšminiai žodžiai:** "geras valdymas"; skurdas; besivystančios šalys; kaimo vietovės; Indonezija.

1. Introduction

The relationship between governance and poverty has been a prominent topic for policymakers and researchers for many years. While several influential scholars have posited that good governance is a crucial driver of development (Das 2023; Idahosa and Abiodun Bakare 2022; Nguyen et al. 2021; Essounga Njan and Morgan 2020), there remains an ongoing debate regarding the direction of causality. Empirical findings on the relationship between governance and poverty are varied and inconclusive. The main point of debate lies between socialists who endorse the resource redistribution policy aimed at enhancing equality in society, and those who highlight the potential of policy to augment the individual's capacity to increase well-being (Blakemore and Warwick-Booth 2013). In terms of empirical evidence, while some studies reveal a positive correlation between good governance and poverty, others do not show such an association (Nguyen et al. 2021; Workneh 2020; Doumbia 2019).

Good governance is increasingly recognized as a pivotal factor for economic growth and human development in Indonesia, even locally (Karmakar and Jana 2023). Good governance can be conceptualized as a systematic process of making and implementing decisions that prioritizes poverty alleviation, demonstrates responsiveness to the community's needs, and ensures long-term sustainability through the effective formulation and implementation of policies (Pomeranz and Stedman 2020).

Rural areas in Indonesia exhibit a higher prevalence of poverty than their urban counterparts (Central Bureau of Statistics 2023). In response to this issue, the Indonesian government has implemented the Village Fund (*Dana Desa*) initiative to expedite development in rural areas through partnerships with local governments (Astika and Sri Subawa 2021; Eko et al. 2014). However, the disparity in poverty rates between rural and urban areas remains a pressing issue that demands further intervention and investigation.

Challenges remain in eradicating poverty in Indonesia, especially in rural areas (Hajad et al. 2023; Nurlinah, Haryanto, and Ansar 2024). Hence, it is imperative to consistently endorse and prioritize the implementation of policies and programs that bolster the principles of good governance and exhibit a high degree of receptiveness to the needs and aspirations of communities situated at the village level. Such initiatives can prove instrumental in achieving sustainable and equitable development, as they facilitate the mobilization of the resources and capacities of these communities and empower them to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihoods. In addition, efforts should be made to improve rural communities' access to available resources and opportunities, such as education, healthcare, and jobs. These efforts are expected to help improve the welfare of rural communities and accelerate poverty reduction in Indonesia as a whole.

We investigate the complex relationship between governance practices and multidimensional poverty at the grassroots level in Indonesia. As the country grapples with various socio-economic challenges, understanding how governance dynamics influence poverty

outcomes is critical for effective policy formulation and implementation. Drawing on recent advances in governance theory and poverty measurement methodology, we synthesize the existing literature to explain recent developments in this field. Specifically, we examine the impact of governance factors such as participation, transparency, accountability, corruption control, public administration procedures, and public service delivery on subjective and objective poverty levels. Additionally, we analyze the linkages between governance mechanisms, socio-economic indicators, and contextual local factors to illustrate the different pathways through which governance structures determine poverty outcomes. By critically assessing the current state of research and identifying knowledge gaps, this article aims to provide insights that can inform evidence-based interventions and encourage sustainable development efforts in grassroots communities in Indonesia.

2. Methodological approach

2.1. Conceptual framework

This study was conceptualized based on the principles of good governance and the poverty index (see Figure 1). Most of the measurements employed by authors in this field utilize a governance index approach adopted from Kaufmann et al. (2010), while the poverty index is adopted from the poverty line of Indonesia Bureau of Statistics (2023) as an objective approach and the subjective approach is measured using a well-being index adopted from Deaton (2018). The presence of good governance captures perceptions of participation in local elections, transparency, accountability, controlling corruption, public administration, public services, and e-government, while poverty refers to the poverty line (minimum expenditure/consumption per capita per day) and perceived well-being, including factors such as income, housing, clothing, health care, and education.

Participation (PD) is considered to be an act involved in decision-making, and the fundamental act of decision-making at the grassroots level is the election of leaders or representatives. Participation is constructed based on how people choose governments and how the government is elected (Kaufmann et al. 2010; Dutta 2020). Transparency (TD) mainly reflects access to information and the extent to which people receive access to information from the government, including information related to poverty, such as lists of people who receive state aid and poverty budgets (Sathish 2020; Sarker et al. 2018). Accountability (AG) exists in the interaction between the community and government (Lakha, Rajasekhar, and Manjula 2015; Mishra 2016). For instance, the extent to which the intensity of the community communicates with the government and how the government responds to the community's needs both represent accountability (Musukhal et al. 2022). Control of corruption (CC) refers to how private interests co-opt public force (Véron et al. 2006; Dauda 2017). This factor questions how public funds are allocated and utilized, whether

there are additional funds for managing public services by the community to speed up the process of their affairs, and the level of commitment to controlling corruption. Public administration (PA) and public services (PS) reflect the quality of public administration procedures and delivery in public health, education, infrastructure, and law (Binh and Ha 2019; Nguyen et al. 2021). For instance, PA considers whether a community is satisfied or not, and the extent to which the quality of costly procedures is perceived by the community as having been achieved. PS reflects the extent to which high-quality public services are delivered by the government (Nguyen et al. 2017). E-government (EG) mainly refers to access to online public services (Mutula 2011) – for example, the availability of online platforms for public needs/inputs and the extent to which the government responds to these needs/inputs.

Poverty (PO) can be split into two: objective poverty refers to the recent absolute poverty line in Indonesia, which is \$0.93 per person per day (Central Bureau of Statistics 2023); while subjective poverty relates to the perception of welfare and minimum needs (Van B. Praag 2014) based on individual satisfaction with consumption, and theoretically represents both instrumental and intrinsic value (Deaton 2018).

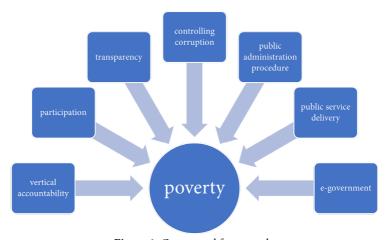


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

(Source: adapted from Kaufmann et al. (2010), Deaton (2018), Nguyen et al. (2021), modified by authors).

2.2. Data collection

Data were collected from Indonesians residing in Gowa Regency, Indonesia, through a questionnaire containing good governance and poverty items. The questionnaire encompassed both closed and open-ended questions. To be eligible, respondents had to meet the

following criteria: (1) be 17 years of age or older, (2) be of Indonesian nationality, (3) have resided in one of the study areas for at least 1 year, (4) communicate in Bahasa, and (5) be willing to participate in the study. The required sample size would fall between 99 and 397 individuals, using a margin of error between 5% and 10%. A total sample size of 200 was deemed appropriate for the study.

2.3. Data analysis

The regression analysis included control variables such as location, age, education, and gender. To enhance the interpretability of the sub-indicators, the scores were summed up to obtain a composite/total score for each variable. The study utilized two regression models: the probit regression model was used for good governance and objective poverty, while the multiple regression model was used for good governance and subjective poverty.

The probit regression model is stated as:

$$y^{*} = \beta_{_{0}} + \beta_{_{1}} \chi_{_{1}} + \beta_{_{2}} \chi_{_{2}} + \dots + \beta_{_{11}} \chi_{_{11}} + \varepsilon (1)$$

$$\begin{cases} y = 1, & \text{if } y^{*} > 0 \\ y = 0, & \text{oterwise} \end{cases}$$

$$y = \beta_{_{0}} + \beta_{_{1}} \chi_{_{1}} + \beta_{_{2}} \chi_{_{2}} + \dots + \beta_{_{11}} \chi_{_{11}} + \varepsilon_{_{1}} (2)$$

where and , respective objective and subjective poverty indicators, take on a value of 0 for individuals not considered poor, and 1 for poor; variables through represent indicators for PD, TD, AG, CC, PA, PS, and EG, respectively; is the intercept term; are the slope coefficients for poverty indicators; are the confounding terms; and is the random error term.

This approach determines the extent to which good governance indicators are associated with poverty indicators while controlling for potential confounding factors. It models their effects in a regression framework by transforming the sub-indicators into interval scales and the categorical and ordinal variables into dummy variables, providing insight into the complex relationships between the variables. Using control variables also accounts for potential biases and the omission of confounding variables that could impact our estimates.

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of the representatives

Respondents were household heads and members with an average age of 40 years. The majority of respondents (65%) were household members, while the remainder were household heads. Regarding occupation, the respondents were categorized into eleven main sectors: household assistant, homemaker, public transportation driver, laborer, fisherman,

farmer, self-employed, private employee, public sector worker, school/college, and unemployed. The largest proportion of respondents were self-employed (29%), followed by homemakers (28.5%), while the remainder (42.5%) fell under the nine other jobs. Regarding gender, females represented 64% of the sample and males 36%.

The average monthly per capita income was IDR 3,038,550. There was broad variation in this figure as seen in the standard deviations, with a minimum value of 0 and a maximum of IDR 200 million. Most respondents (96.5%) were literate, with varied levels of educational attainment ranging from elementary to tertiary school. However, most respondents had achieved secondary school completion (52.5%). Primary was the peak educational attainment level more frequently in households receiving state aid, while higher education was more often achieved in households not receiving state aid.

3.2. Inferential analysis

Most good governance variables significantly negatively impact poverty, indicating that their improvement can help alleviate poverty among rural households in Gowa, Indonesia (see Table 1). Notably, the variables of participation and decision-making (PD), accountability (AC), public administration (PA), and e-government (EG) exhibit statistically significant effects on poverty reduction, albeit to varying degrees. Specifically, an increase in participation at the local level (PD) is associated with a 1.310-point reduction in the average poverty Z score when holding other variables constant. This suggests that more participatory governance models can effectively reduce regional poverty. Moreover, a one-level increase in AC, PA, and EG can reduce average poverty by 1.163, 1.223, and 1.868 points, respectively. This underscores the importance of promoting accountability, streamlining administrative procedures, and leveraging technology in public services to reduce poverty in rural areas.

While the remaining variables – transparency and disclosure (TD), corruption control (CC), and the provision of public services (PS) – did not have a statistically significant impact on poverty reduction, the sizes of their effects are nonetheless noteworthy, with magnitudes of 0.447, 0.531, and 1.223 points, respectively. Thus, strengthening these dimensions of good governance may impact poverty reduction in the long term. Overall, these findings suggest that improvements in good governance can significantly reduce poverty among rural households in Gowa, ultimately leading to increased household income and well-being.

Table 1. The effects of good governance on subjective and objective poverty status (N = 200): Ordinary Least Squares (OLS).

	Objective poverty			Subjective poverty	
Variables	Coeff.	ME on Pr (y = 1)	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value
Participation (PD)	-1.310**	-0.392	0.047	-0.052	0.618
Transparency (TD)	-0.447	-0.134	0.262	-0.003	0.968
Accountability (AG)	-1.163*	-0.348	0.078	0.125**	0.048
Controlling corruption (CC)	-0.531	-0.159	0.424	0.010	0.908
Public administration procedure (PA)	-1.223**	-0.366	0.015	0.217***	0.009
Public service delivery (PS)	-1.372	-0.411	0.119	0.038	0.801
E-government (EG)	-1.868***	-0.559	0.009	0.177**	0.037
Good governance (GG)	-6.785***	-2.091	0.001	0.636	0.002
Bontoala (1 if yes. Paccinongang as a reference)	-0.275	-0.085	0.386	0.083*	0.084
Panciro (1 if yes. Paccinongang as a reference)	0.351	0.108	0.137	0.088**	0.021
Gender	-0.190	-0.058	0.386	0.026	0.447
Education	-0.020	-0.006	0.444	0.003	0.453
Age	-0.006	-0.002	0.400	0.001	0.869
Constant	4.283***		0.001	0.486***	0.001
Wald X2-statistic	34.9 (12)		2.33(6,193)		
<i>p</i> -value	0.001			0.034	
AIC	232.87			0.06	

^{***, **,} and * indicate p < 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10, respectively.

(Source: survey data)

4. Discussion

Overall, this study demonstrates a high level of good governance, which is consistent with the findings of other scholars who have assessed good governance in rural areas (Roy and Tisdell 1998; Liu et al. 2022). There is also a strong correlation between good governance and objective and subjective poverty. However, the poverty rate was not significantly

different between the two indicators, indicating that poverty levels were relatively low. Additionally, the findings suggest that good governance could potentially reduce poverty or mitigate the likelihood of experiencing poverty. While the relationship of good governance with poverty is scantly evidenced in studies of rural areas, scholars have explored this relationship in a broader context (Ochi, Saidi, and Labidi 2023; Akobeng 2016). The results of this study prompt the detailed discussion of each indicator.

The PD indicator, which encompasses grassroots-level decision-making, such as local elections (Kaufmann et al. 2010), was recorded at a high level in the study area. The Gowa community was reported to be actively involved in decision-making and social activities, with the quality of the administration of the election also deemed to be relatively good – for instance, involvement in formulating village development plans and transparency when counting votes in elections. Previous studies have linked high levels of voter participation in rural elections to electoral fairness and low corruption (Wu, Rogers, and Wang 2023), whereas regions with high corruption tend to discourage electoral participation (Subekti et al. 2023).

Furthermore, a significant correlation between high community participation and poverty was found. Kakumba (2010) asserted that citizens' participation is crucial for enhancing the local capacity for rural development and poverty alleviation. Increased participation would increase agricultural output, employment opportunities, and household income. The development strategy of the Indonesian government has encouraged citizens' involvement, although the current community participation model in rural Indonesia is characterized by the involvement of RT/RW or local village elites in decision-making. This implies that the position of the village head has become more exclusive than in previous years (Berenschot, Capri, and Dhian 2021).

Pavlova and Lühr (2023) found that non-political voluntary participation has a more significant impact on welfare indicators than political participation. Das and Das (2018) concluded that grassroots democracy, decentralization, and participation can enhance citizens' voices in policymaking and facilitate the efficient distribution of public welfare benefits.

In terms of the TD indicator, while the government provides information easily to the public, there is a lack of trust in the integrity of this information. For example, the government openly announces the list of households receiving state aid and the amount of assistance given to them, but there are households included due to family connections or the presence of relatives in government rather than actual poverty. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests that government behavior in Indonesia tends to be based on patron-client interests (Yakub, Armunanto, and Haryanto 2022). Transparency has no significant relationship with the level of poverty in rural Gowa. However, this study revealed that the list of households receiving state aid was determined transparently, which allows for the further evaluation of efforts to reduce poverty in rural areas. It is widely recognized that the more transparent public officials are, the easier it is for the public to obtain

basic services (Warf and Stewart 2016). However, the reason for the lack of a significant relationship between transparency and poverty reduction in rural Gowa remains unclear. These results suggest the need for further investigation into the mechanisms underlying the relationship between transparency and poverty reduction in Indonesia, particularly in rural areas where poverty remains a significant challenge.

Regarding the AG indicator, the intensity of communication between the public and the government in Gowa is relatively high, and the government responds to citizens' needs. Fossati (2016) concludes that accountability resulting from electoral democracy at the local level plays an important role in the effective implementation of national social protection programs. However, in terms of controlling corruption, there is a negative attitude from communities, especially regarding whether the government is serious in its commitment to eradicating corruption or not. This is related to the notion that government behavior in Indonesia tends to be based on patron-client interests, which undermine efforts to address corruption.

In terms of its impact on poverty in rural Gowa, the AG dimension has been found to have a significant relationship, while the CC dimension is unexpectedly not significant. Nguyen et al. (2021) suggested that improving the AG and CC dimensions can result in more efficient public investment and better access to public services for the poor. Corruption tends to benefit those in power, and reducing corruption can help narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. Therefore, increasing accountability and controlling corruption are effective ways to accelerate poverty reduction and improve the standard of living. Studies conducted by Warf and Stewart (2016) in Latin America and the Caribbean have shown that reducing corruption positively correlates with increased access to education and literacy rates.

The PA and PS indicators reflect the quality of public administration procedures and their implementation in the public sector, including services such as public health, education, infrastructure, and law. Although the community is highly satisfied with the established administrative procedures, they rated the delivery of public services lower than the overall average satisfaction value. This low rating may prompt citizens to take political action, such as by urging politicians to intervene and expedite the delivery process, engaging in clientelism, electing leaders who pledge to enhance service efficiency and streamline bureaucracy, or appealing together to safeguard against inadequate service delivery.

Furthermore, a significant relationship between public administration and poverty reduction was identified. Indeed, streamlined public administration will provide space for the community to be more productive in increasing their income because fast administrative procedures will improve the quality of public services in rural areas, allowing access to government services and investing in households to reduce poverty (Dunford, Gao, and Li 2020).

In contrast, PS has no influence on poverty reduction when viewed from the two dependent poverty variables. This finding may be attributed to the weak sub-indicators of public

service delivery in influencing the effect of good governance on poverty. Nonetheless, this study highlights the importance of efficient administrative procedures in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty rates. Dunford et al. (2020) demonstrated that the Chinese government's program to reduce poverty has produced extraordinary breakthroughs; China has been able to reduce its large poverty rate with administrative procedures accessed from the center, regions, and villages, making it easier for people in rural areas to increase their income. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize measures that enhance public administration and streamline bureaucratic processes to improve access to essential public services and promote economic growth in rural areas.

The EG indicator has significantly impacted household income in rural Gowa. While it is true that most people in the area have access to the Internet either in their environment or at home, they are not aware of the online platform provided by the government for public services, which indicates a lack of utilization. This issue stems from various factors, including a lack of government awareness, support, and political will, documented in prior studies (Akpan-Obong et al. 2022). Thus, appropriate management procedures and context are needed in rural communities to promote the use of e-government, particularly in Gowa.

Research suggests that speed in responding to complaints from rural communities strengthens the government's ability to provide fast and efficient services, thereby increasing the impact of e-government on poverty reduction in rural areas (Akpan-Obong et al. 2022; Anas et al. 2024). In addition, the emergence of technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence and big data, can facilitate better decision-making and offer programs that better align with the needs of rural communities. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that using e-government for anti-poverty programs can reinforce existing power structures and result in unequal access to opportunities, particularly in regions with unequal Internet access and limited digital technologies (Maiorano, Das, and Masiero 2018).

Conclusions

- This study investigated the correlation between governance quality and poverty at
 the grassroots level in rural areas, both subjectively and objectively. The research
 focused on the Gowa district in Indonesia and utilized primary data. Governance
 quality was operationalized through the application of the governance index formulated by Kaufmann et al. (2010), objective poverty was assessed using the poverty line determined by the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (2023), and the
 measurement of well-being adopted Deaton's (2018) subjective approach.
- The empirical analysis, employing linear regression and probit methodologies, uncovered a positive and statistically significant correlation between governance quality and poverty. Notably, participation, accountability, public administration

- procedures, and e-government initiatives favorably influence poverty levels. These findings indicate that governance is important for increasing the income and welfare of rural households. The positive relationship observed between governance index score and the reduced probability of experiencing poverty in rural areas implies that superior governance practices benefit the impoverished segments of society that dwell within rural districts.
- 3. These findings provide support for the existence of a causal relationship between good governance and objective poverty, and shed light on the impact of good governance on subjective poverty. The study identified several potential mechanisms through which this influence occurs, including the enhancement of e-government, participation, public administration procedures, and accountability. Districts with stronger village governance exhibit higher levels of participation and bolster decision-making processes that contribute to overall prosperity.

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VALDYMO POVEIKIS IR PRIEMONĖS DAUGIAMAČIAM SKURDUI ĮVEIKTI INDONEZIJOJE

Anotacija. Mokslinėje literatūroje daugiausia dėmesio skiriama tyrinėjimui, kaip valdymas veikia objektyvias skurdo priemones. Tačiau šis tyrimas apima daugiau nei subjektyvų skurdą paprastų žmonių lygmeniu, ypač kaimo vietovėse. Empirinė analizė, pasitelkus *probit* metodikas, atskleidė teigiamą ir statistiškai reikšmingą koreliaciją tarp valdymo kokybės ir skurdo. Pažymėtina, kad dalyvavimas, atskaitomybė, viešojo administravimo

procedūros ir e. valdžios iniciatyvos teigiamai veikė skurdo lygį. Šio tyrimo išvados pabrėžia valdymo svarbą gerinant kaimo namų ūkių pajamas ir gerovę. Be to, tyrimas atskleidžia, kad "gero valdymo" praktika teigiamai veikia mažinant skurdo tikimybę kaimo vietovėse, ypač tarp skurdžių kaimo bendruomenių segmentų. Rezultatai patvirtina priežastinio ryšio tarp "gero valdymo" ir objektyvaus skurdo sampratą ir atskleidžia poveikį subjektyviam skurdui. Atlikus tyrimą siūloma keletas galimų mechanizmų, kurie realizuoja šį poveikį, taip pat stiprinamos e. valdžios, dalyvavimo, viešojo administravimo procedūros ir atskaitomybė. Apylinkėse, kuriose kaimų valdymas vadybiškesnis, žmonės aktyviau dalyvauja, o prie bendros gerovės prisideda veiksmingesni sprendimų priėmimo procesai.

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