LEADERS SHOULD BE PROBLEM-SOLVERS NOT PROBLEM-MAKERS: LESSON LEARNED FROM JEMBER, EAST JAVA

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In organizations, especially government organizations, there are numerous elements that can impact the effectiveness of a leader, yet the most crucial one is the leader's own qualities and actions. This study aims to provide more specific examples or case studies to illustrate the impact of a leader's policies and actions on governance. Moreover, it would make the argument more compelling and relatable to readers in the context of regional government administration. The methodology used in the research is qualitative methods employed and how the data was collected and analyzed. The methods would establish the research's credibility and provide more context for the findings. Finally, it could be helpful to provide some practical recommendations or suggestions for how organizations or governments can improve their leadership selection and development processes. This study would add value for readers interested in applying the insights from the research to their contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

According to experts, the success of an organization is heavily influenced by the individual who holds the leadership position. Organization leaders are very influential in how an organization is a form. This condition also applies to governments in autonomous regions. Whoever is elected will determine the success/failure future of government organizations and the autonomous region (Berman & Prasojo, 2018). The administration, held by the Regent in this district, had become hot news, not only in local media but even in the national media. Unfortunately, the information is not related to success but somewhat related to the failure and chaos of governance. The disorder was precisely the result of the actions and policies of the Regent, who was elected through general elections because she was determined to have qualified capabilities, considering that the previous period's administration was full of collusion, corruption and nepotism practices.

Government leaders have a crucial but limited role in institutionalization, particularly in implementing good governance. They hold a unique authority and position as service providers and policymakers for their people (Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020; Kotter, 2022). To influence and persuade various parties within and outside the organization, the communication strategy chosen by Success Leaders is of utmost importance (Collinson, 2008). A leader's communication style and approach reflect their relationship with subordinates and colleagues/stakeholders and ultimately determine the success or failure of policies and programs implemented (Elmore, 2011; Maksum, 2018).

The government needs to maintain positive relationships with the representatives of the people. A successful leader must be able to subtly influence and persuade (Ciulla, 2005), both on a personal and political level, as obtaining political support is crucial in gaining approval for
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programs and policies. A credible government leader prioritizes maintaining good relations with various parties, including people's representatives (Downe et al., 2016; Nanda, 2006). When organizational leaders share this understanding, good relations between organizations result in more successful outcomes, making it a valuable investment for the organization (Shahid & Azhar, 2013; Sharma et al., 2019).

To ensure a thriving community, all parties involved must prioritize the well-being of the people over their own personal or group interests. Effective communication and cooperation between government agencies are essential for this (Koppell, 2005). As noted by Maksum (2021), failing to collaborate in this manner poses a significant risk of abuse within the autonomy system and local government conditions. Working together towards a common goal is the only way to create a prosperous region.

Influential government leaders require a broad perspective and a creative mindset complemented by creative and innovative thinking. They should possess sufficient technical skills (Prasojo & Holdin, 2018). Moreover, the bravery to take risks and make decisions to implement reforms, as well as building positive relationships and communicating effectively with relevant stakeholders, are crucial for collaboratively achieving shared objectives (Azhar et al., 2012; Choi & Fukuoka, 2015). To drive improvements, a leader must embody strength, courage, creativity, innovation, vision, and good character (Polston-Murdoch, 2015). Furthermore, a leader's integrity is paramount as they set the standard for their followers.

The commitment of all involved parties is crucial to achieve success in regional leadership, especially that of organizational leaders, whether internal or external (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Bryson et al., 2015). Policy implementation may only be practical with loyalty, leading to suboptimal results (Rivan & Maksum, 2019). Moreover, a lack of organizational commitment may prolong the resolution of various issues and, in some cases, may never be resolved, even with a change in leadership (Argyriades, 2006).

It is imperative to recognize the complex nature of leadership and the multitude of factors that impact it to gain a comprehensive understanding of this subject, qualitative research methods are necessary. This approach is well-suited for examining the multifaceted aspects of leadership. The Jember Regency Government was the primary source of data and information for this study, including the Jember Inspector, Jember Regional Secretary, Deputy Chairperson of the Jember Regional People's Representative Council, and the Special Inspectorate Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In addition, local and national media reports were also utilized.

This study aims to criticize and demonstrate the impact of leadership in local government in Jember, one of the autonomous districts in East Java. The researchers expect the study to provide recommendations for how organizations or governments can improve their leadership selection and development processes. This study would add value for readers interested in applying the insights from the research to their contexts.
METHOD

The researcher used a qualitative approach along with a literature review methodology. Data for the study was gathered from a range of papers and other sources, primarily from books and scholarly journals exploring leadership, both in general and specifically in problem-solving. The researcher then applied the Miles and Huberman (2014) three-stage approach, which entails data reduction, data visualization, and conclusion drawing/verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Jember, located in the southeastern part of Java, is an autonomous region within the province of East Java and covers an area of 3,306.689 km². In 2016, the region made history by electing a female Regent for the first time. This young politician, who had experience in business, medical education, and non-bureaucratic roles and also success as a businessman and owner of private hospitals in Jember and Banyuwangi, showcased her managerial expertise, aimed to bringing positive change to a government that had long been plaguing by collusion, corruption, and nepotism.

However, her election did not guarantee success in governing. In the last year of her reign, she became the first Regent in Jember to be impeached by the Regional People's Representative Council, and almost at the same time, almost all government employees in Jember passed a motion of no confidence against her. Ultimately, she received suspension and dismissal from the East Java Provincial Governor following a particular examination conducted on the recommendation of the Minister of Home Affairs at the end of her term.

Based on information and data gathered from reliable sources, tensions arose between the Regional People's Representative Council and the government during its first year. The tensions were due to a need for adequate institutional and political communication, as the Regent refused to engage in discussions, ignored suggestions and input from the Council In preparing the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan, particularly in relation to budget allocations for regional infrastructure development. She rejected any form of two-way communication, even forbade her staff to fulfilled invitation from Regional Council. Despite being invited for a discussion by the political party that nominated her as Regent, she declined the invitation, which continued throughout her reign. Consequently, her action hindered the smooth functioning of the government and development, compounded by numerous complaints of governance chaos. These factors prompted the need for development planning.

Although the Regent possesses intelligence and an aptitude for administration and bureaucracy in government, according to all informants, her strong and authoritarian character leads her to dominate and justify her own opinions. This has resulted in a strained relationship between the executive and the legislature, which caused chaos in governance. The Regent's uncompromising attitude and desire for domination make it challenging for all parties involved. Additionally, she often enforces policies and orders, even if they violate existing regulations, which can be troubling for government staff. For instance, when it comes to promotion or rotation, the Regent insists that her orders be followed, even if they do not comply with regulations. In cases
where her orders violate rules, she instructs her staff to find loopholes to carry them out. Those who refuse to comply or fail to follow her orders may face consequences.

The most significant governance issue pertains to personnel management. During the current government's tenure, more than 50% of the staff in any given position were transferred or rotated, including those in structural functions. Most of the Regent rotation policies did not comply with civil servant regulations. Several structural officials in Jember were deactivated and concurrently held by other unaffected officials. This policy severely impeded the government's performance. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the East Java Provincial Government carried out a special inspection due to the chaos in staffing governance, particularly in regard to rotation and promotion, which caused disruption.

In a letter dated December 10th, 2019, the Governor of East Java Province issued a directive (number 131/25434/011.2/2019) based on the letter (number 700/1249/SJ) from the Minister of Home Affairs on November 11th, 2019. The directive was the result of a special inspection, and it instructed the Regent to cancel any policies that did not comply with regulations and immediately follow the directions outlined in the Minister of Home Affairs' letter (number 821.2/442/Dukcapil) from January 9th, 2019. Specifically, the recommendation was to cancel any rotations or promotions that did not align with the rules. The directives and orders were not implemented until the end of the Regent's term in office.

Moreover, the Regent has paid scant attention to the employees' needs and welfare. Consequently, in the final year of the Regent's administration, almost all government employees held a unified protest against arbitrary policies that did not conform to the rules.

Even in terms of accountability for the use of the regional budget, based on the results of audits by the Supreme Audit Agency from 2019 (Disclaimer) and 2020 (Adverse), several audit findings also indicated an unacceptable use of the budget. A concerning matter is a need for more accountability in allocating billions of budget for Covid 19 mitigation. Furthermore, it has come to light that the Regent has offered aid to millions through her hospital and assigned government personnel to the same establishment.

Table 1. Summary of Audit Opinion of the Supreme Audit Board 2016-2020

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>BPK Opinion Value</td>
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Source: Inspectorate Jember, quoted from the Jember Regency Government Medium Term Development Plan 2021-2026

During the final year of her tenure, she should have submitted a budget proposal for the upcoming year, causing Jember Regency to miss out on the disbursement of budget allocations from the Central Government. As a result, government operations came to a standstill due to the need for more funds to finance them, and even the government could not pay its employees' salaries. Various parties, including government people in her close circle, have attempted to
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provide input, especially regarding governance chaos and rule violations, and mediation efforts from various parties to resolve the chaos that occurred, but to no avail.

During the final year of her tenure, Jember should have presented a budget proposal for the upcoming year. However, due to various issues, including the impeachment of the Regional People's Representative Council, Jember failed to submit a Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan. This led to Jember not receiving a budget allocation from the Central Government in the following year. As a result, the Government of Jember faced financial difficulties, which almost resulted in the halt of government operations and delayed payments of government employees' salaries.

At its peak, apart from a vote of no confidence from the Regional People's Representative Council, the Governor of East Java, on the recommendation of the Minister of Home Affairs, issued a letter of suspension for the Regent. The suspension period was also used by the interim Regent, namely the Deputy Regent of Jember, to gradually overcome existing problems, both those that occurred within government organizations and tried to improve relations with the Regional Council following the orders of the Governor of East Java on recommendations from the Central government as part of the results of a special inspection conducted.

Surprisingly, towards the end of her reign, which was only about two months left after going on leave to campaign to run for the next period, when the Regent was able to return to her duties. In the remaining short term of office, the Regent made a policy to cancel all the improvements her temporary replacement had made by returning everything according to her decision before serving the suspension.

Of course, it already is imagined the consequences of this policy. There was chaos in the government, and almost all employees in Jember Regency, from the lowest to the highest levels, staged demonstrations and declared a motion of no confidence in the Regent. Finally, the Governor of East Java gave sanctions by issuing a dismissal letter for the Regent. However, because the letter only came out at the end of the term of office, the sanction could not be carried out.

Several actions and policies exacerbated The Regent's moves, which indicated collusion, corruption and nepotism. After she was no longer in office, based on the various complaints and evidence provided, the Oversight Agency and Law Enforcement began to process the Regent's actions and policies, especially those with indications of corruption causing harm to the Regional/State finances.

It is truly unfortunate that the havoc caused by the Regent cannot be immediately prevented. According to the Head of Supervision Section at the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Home Affairs, this is due to various limitations in regulations, especially regarding autonomous authority and resources. As a result, the actions taken in the Jember Case are repressive due to the chaotic situations and conditions.

Refer to data and information were gathered from Jember Inspector, during the upcoming government period from 2021-2026, the previous district head was not successful in being re-elected. Unfortunately, the former district head's departure has also left a negative impact on the
position's reputation. As a result, the new Regents have inherited several pressing issues that need to be addressed immediately.

The current situation in Jember is being affected by several conditions. Firstly, the Governor of East Java declined the Draft State Revenue and Expenditure Budget due to it being submitted late and lacking approval from the Regional Council. Secondly, there are issues with HR/staff governance that involve unprocedural rotation and promotion. Thirdly, concerns have arisen regarding the relationship and political communication between the government and DPRD. Fourthly, the relationship between the government of Jember and higher level governments at both the provincial and central levels is causing issues. Lastly, the policies implemented by the previous District Head after their return from campaign leave are having consequences.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the issue faced in the Jember administration, it concluded that even though from the background and track record, initially a leader is considered qualified and believed to be able to carry out his duties according to the agreed commitments, this is not enough to guarantee that the leader will carry out his duties as expected. There are so many factors that influence the success of leadership.

A leader, especially in government, should always maintain the integrity and set an example as a good leader. A leader must also have the courage to make changes but must be carried out according to existing rules, and be able to position himself as a problem solver, not the other way around. Upholding the trust and commitment given to stakeholders by prioritizing good/persuasive and fair communication in overcoming the issues faced will also greatly assist the smooth implementation of the policies. Moreover, most importantly, a government leader must prioritize and uphold the interests of society rather than personal interests.

On the other hand, the chaos occurred until it was protracted and lasted for quite a long time, namely from the beginning of taking office until the end of the term, showing the weakness/non-functioning of the existing supervisory system. Unfortunately, the imposition of the sanctions was issued very late. Policies/rules related to supervision also need to be improved to prevent the same thing from happening again. If there are obstacles to moving quickly in overcoming a problem, there is nothing wrong with creating or improving the rules so that they can accommodate this action. Supervision improvements reduce the impact of damage and save the broader interests, namely the community.

One of the best innovation projects a region can undertake is the need for a better emphasis on governance and regional leadership concerns in government curricula and vocational training programs for future regional leaders. Hopefully, future research can take this issue into consideration for future discussions.
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REFERENCE
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