



Implementation of Public Policy in Cultural Heritage Preservation: A Case Study of Sunyaragi Cave Management in Cirebon City

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ABSTRACT

Preserving national identity and supporting culture based sustainable development require safeguarding cultural heritage. One legacy of the Cirebon Sultanate is the Sunyaragi Cave, which holds historical, architectural, and cultural significance. Although preservation regulations exist, challenges remain in policy implementation. This study evaluates the Sunyaragi Cave preservation policy by examining policy actors, implementation mechanisms, and supporting and hindering factors. Using a qualitative case study, data were collected through interviews with the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office and the Sunyaragi Water Park Management Agency, along with field observations. Data were analyzed using George C. Edwards III's implementation model and street level bureaucracy. Findings show that implementation is suboptimal due to weak coordination, limited resources, and insufficient public communication. Inclusive preservation requires collaborative governance.

INTRODUCTION

Countries must protect material cultural heritage, including cultural heritage sites, because the collective identity and historical continuity of a community cannot be separated from the artifacts and sites that reflect the past. In addition to their architectural or historical value, cultural heritage sites play a significant social, economic, and cultural role in the development of local and national communities. The preservation of cultural heritage is an important part of efforts to maintain national identity and historical heritage. Sunyaragi Cave in Cirebon City, as one of the historical sites of the Cirebon Sultanate, has high historical, architectural, and cultural value. However, the preservation of this area faces serious challenges such as physical degradation of buildings, lack of maintenance budget, low public awareness, and weak coordination between government agencies and the private sector.

Cirebon is an interesting place to study due to its rich cultural heritage and cultural preservation in West Java. Within it lies Sunyaragi Cave, which has high historical and architectural value for our community and country. This cave is not only a physical structure, but also a symbol of the power and culture of the Cirebon Sultanate and plays an important role in the division of territory. However, like many places in the world, the management and preservation of Sunyaragi Cave involves more than physical conservation; it encompasses governance, legislation, public participation, and sustainable tourism development. This situation indicates that the management of this site requires a broad approach based on public policy and technical conservation.

Based on national laws such as Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage, which has established a legal basis for the preservation of cultural heritage in Indonesia, cultural heritage preservation policies at the regional level still have several weaknesses. There are differences between field practices and policy norms, according to many empirical studies. For example, research conducted in the Kampung Tugu area of Jakarta found that increasing industrialization, changes in land use, and a lack of coordination between agencies are the main obstacles to implementing preservation policies (Anisa Surya Lestari (2025). In addition, research on the Kayutangan heritage area in Malang City found that, despite infrastructure upgrades and increased tourist visits, long-term management remains incomplete due to unclear regulations and unfocused management. According to Harnani & Wanusmawatie (2025), the main issues faced are how public policies are interpreted and implemented in the local context, what supports and hinders their implementation, and how the government system functions for the preservation of cultural heritage sites.

The management of cultural heritage requires an approach that is appropriate to the characteristics of the Cirebon City area. A cultural heritage preservation plan must be developed and implemented in every location that has cultural heritage assets. Preservation is a comprehensive effort to manage, develop, and utilize cultural heritage in Cirebon City through planning, implementation, and supervision that supports the welfare of the community. Based on the Mayor's Decree No. 19 of 2001 concerning the protection and preservation of Cultural Heritage areas and buildings in the city of Cirebon, there

are 58 Cultural Heritage sites in the city of Cirebon. There are 34 suspected Cultural Heritage objects. The management of the Sunyaragi Cave Cultural Heritage tourist attraction requires attention from various parties, not only archaeologists but also all stakeholders.

Policy implementation is an integral part of public policy studies that focuses on the stages of policy execution. This process is multidimensional and complex, and is often influenced by political dynamics due to the intervention of various actors and competing interests (Khumayah et al. (2020).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of public policy in the preservation of cultural heritage at the Sunyaragi Cave site in Cirebon City. Specifically, this study aims to: 1. Identify public policy actors and mechanisms used to manage the Sunyaragi Cave site; 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation based on policy implementation indicators. This study is expected to not only contribute empirically to the literature but also offer practical implications for cultural heritage site managers, local governments, and other stakeholders through a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of this public policy. In recent years, literature research on cultural heritage preservation in Indonesia has grown. Lubis et al. (2024) evaluated cultural preservation practices and policy frameworks in Indonesia and found that planning, institutional capacity, incentives, funding sources, and public participation were still lacking. In addition, research focusing on implementation at the local site level is still very limited, especially at sites that explicitly adopt an implementation policy framework. Normative law or physical conservation is not the focus of studies in Indonesia.

There are several significant research gaps. The first is that there is no empirical research that combines analysis of public policy implementation with research on cultural site preservation at the regional level. The second is that few studies have examined the actors, mechanisms, and obstacles to implementation in specific areas such as Sunyaragi Cave. The third is that more perspectives on sustainability and governance in local cultural preservation are needed. Therefore, this study is expected to make empirical and conceptual contributions to fill these gaps.

Based on the findings of this study, it can practically serve as a reference for improving the management of local cultural site preservation. This study can offer suggestions for improving coordination between institutions, increasing community participation, increasing resources and funding, and realizing more inclusive and sustainable preservation. Therefore, this study is highly relevant both academically and practically.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Policy Implementation

The government makes decisions. Policy implementation is a way for a policy to achieve its desired targets. In implementing public policy, there are two alternative steps that can be taken, namely directly implementing it in the form of a program or through the development of derivative policies from the public policy. The policy implementation process is clear, starting with programs,

continuing with projects, and finally becoming activities. This adapts the mechanisms commonly used in management, especially in the public sector. Policies are transformed into various programs, which are then translated into projects, and finally elaborated into various activities, whether organized by the government, the community, or a collaboration between the government and the community.

George C. Edwards III (1980) added a new aspect to policy implementation analysis by identifying four key components that influence successful implementation: Edwards assessed that the main problem in public administration is the lack of attention to implementation. He stated emphatically that “without implementation, the effective decisions of policymakers will not be carried out successfully.”

According to Amin and Pratiwi (2015) cited by Khumayah (2021), implementation is defined as a complex policy execution process that requires the active involvement of various strategic resources. Resources include human elements as implementers, operational fund allocation, and organizational capabilities. This stage can be carried out by actors from the public and private sectors, either individually or collectively, with the main objective of realizing the goals that have been systematically formulated by policy makers.

Public Policy

Public policy has the function of being a variable that influences and is influenced by other variables. This means that a policy is not only about the decision to enact a law on a particular matter, but also about the decision to implement it properly. According to Thomas R Dye, quoted by Sukarman Purba (2022), public policy is defined as “whatever the government chooses to do or not to do.” Public policy is what the government does or does not do.

Policy analysis is a systematic process that includes problem assessment, condition mapping, identification of causal factors, and formulation of policy alternatives. Meanwhile, public policy has binding legal consequences for society. Before being implemented, every policy must go through stages of approval and ratification by institutions that have official authority in accordance with the governance of the competent government (Febrian Jaya et al. (2024). Based on the realm of public policy, it is assumed that decision makers are able to act completely rationally, namely by comprehensively considering all policy alternatives and choosing the most optimal option based on objective analysis (Ridhotuloh et al. (2024).

Thus, based on the above definition, public policy essentially arises as a response to various issues that require resolution by the government. Therefore, public policy cannot be separated from public administration, because administrative institutions have a mandate to formulate and implement policy solutions that are in line with the objectives of the state. In this context, public administration acts as the operational instrument of the state in realizing the vision and mission of the government through the formulation of effective, efficient, and public interest-oriented policies.

Governance and Preservation of Cultural Heritages Sites

Cultural heritage preservation is a cultural legacy that must be preserved, requiring collaboration between various parties, including the government, historians, archaeologists, and cultural experts. The role of the community in cultural heritage preservation is also very important. The city of Cirebon is one of the cities that has many cultural heritage sites that are the legacy of our ancestors. Therefore, the management of cultural heritage can be carried out by the government or private parties who are responsible for ensuring that the cultural heritage is preserved by the community. Good cultural heritage preservation can increase tourism potential and also preserve the historical values contained therein.

This study aims to identify the role played by the community around Sunyaragi Cave in preserving cultural heritage. Another objective of this study is to analyze the challenges and obstacles as well as the potential of the community around Sunyaragi Cave in preserving local culture. Research conducted by Wibawa & Ali (2020) shows that the existence of Cultural Heritage Sites in Indonesia has generally been regulated and protected in stages. The Indonesian Constitution, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, specifically Article 32 paragraph (1), mandates that "The state shall promote Indonesian national culture in the midst of world civilization by guaranteeing the freedom of the community to maintain and develop its cultural values." The Indonesian Constitution contains constitutional norms that oblige the government to protect and preserve all cultural objects, manifestations of national culture, as cultural heritage.

Case studies conducted in Indonesia provide insights into how cultural preservation policies can be implemented. In his study on Kayutangan Heritage in Malang, Suryono (2025) shows that despite regulations supporting preservation, implementation is hampered by limited resources and a lack of coordination between institutions. In his research on Kampung Tugu in Jakarta, Basil (2025) found that industrialization and changes in land use threaten the preservation of the area.

According to the theory of Collaborative Governance by Ansell & Gash (2008), collaborative governance in public policy often implies the involvement of more stakeholders than corporatism, and stakeholders often do not have a monopoly on representing their sector. In other words, most studies in the collaborative governance literature evaluate the "outcomes of the process" rather than the outcomes of policy or management.

The case study of Sunyaragi Cave in Cirebon City offers an important local context for assessing the implementation of cultural preservation policies. This study focuses on multi-actor interactions, inhibiting and driving factors, and the effectiveness of policy implementation. This study will fill a gap in local and empirical research.

Sunyaragi Cave, Cirebon City

Sunyaragi Cave or Taman Sari Guwa Sunyaragi is an artificial cave located on Jl. Brigjen Dharsono in the village of Sunyaragi, Kesambi, Cirebon City. There

is a temple-like building called Sunyaragi Cave, or Taman Air Sunyaragi, often referred to as Tamansari Sunyaragi. The name “Sunyaragi” comes from the Sanskrit words “sunya,” meaning quiet, and “ragi,” meaning body. According to researchers (Hermawan et al. (2024)), in the linguistic tradition of the Cirebonese people, Sunyaragi Cave is known as “Taman Kaputren Panyepi Ing Raga,” which means “The Royal Family's Garden for Purification.” This name not only reflects the physical function of the site, but also carries symbolic meaning as a place of purification for the Cirebon Sultanate.

There are two versions of the history of the establishment of Sunyaragi Cave. The first is an oral account of the history of Sunyaragi Cave that has been passed down from generation to generation by the nobles of Cirebon or descendants of the royal palace. This version is better known as the Carub Kanda version. The second version is the Caruban Nagari version, which is based on the book *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, handwritten by Prince Kararangen or Prince Arya Carbon in 1720. The Caruban Nagari version of the history of the establishment of Sunyaragi Cave is used as a reference by Sunyaragi Cave tour guides. According to this version, Sunyaragi Cave was founded in 1703 AD by Prince Kararangen, the great-grandson of Sunan Gunung Jati.

In terms of institutional context, the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office plays a strategic role as a local government actor responsible for the preservation, utilization, and development of Sunyaragi Cave as a cultural asset and leading tourist destination. The agency's functions include facilitating the physical conservation of the site, formulating preservation policies based on national regulations on Cultural Heritage, and collaborating with the Kasepuhan Palace as the site owner and the local community to create a participatory preservation management model that integrates cultural values with creative economic interests (Mughni et al. (2025)).

Table 1. Previous Research

No	Researcher & Year	Title of Research	Method	Key Findings	Limitation/Gaps	Relevance to Research
1.	(Anisa Surya Lestari (2025)	Implementation of Conservation Policies in Tugu Village, Jakarta	Qualitative	Main obstacles to conservation: industrialization, land use change, lack of coordination between agencies	Not focused on theory-based implementation analysis Edwards III	Explaining the obstacles to policy implementation at cultural sites in large cities, relevant as a comparison to the case of Cirebon
2.	(Harnani & Wanusmawatie (2025)	Preservation of the Kayutangan Heritage Area in Malang	Descriptive- Qualitative	Infrastructure is improving; tourist visits are increasing; long-term management is not yet optimal due to unclear regulations	Does not discuss policy actors and governance dynamics	This shows that regulatory issues also occur on other sites similar to Sunyaragi.

3.	(Ramadani & Salioso (2025)	Kuantan Singingi Cultural Heritage Development Strategy	Descriptive Qualitative	Conservation strategies are on track; budget constraints and low collaboration	Does not discuss policy implementation systematically	Relevant to look at other regional strategy models
4.	(Hermawan et al. (2024)	Development & Management of Sunyaragi Cave Tourist Park	Descriptive Qualitative	Improving regional carrying capacity, community collaboration, cultural promotion	Not examining the implementation of public policy	Becoming the most relevant local research for the Sunyaragi context
5.	(Iwan Setiawan (2020)	Cultural Heritage Preservation Strategies for Tourist Return Visits to Cirebon	Quantitative	Good conservation strategies; constraints in terms of facilities, infrastructure, and management	Focus on tourism, not policy implementation	Becoming the latest empirical reference on conservation in Cirebon

From previous studies, it can be seen that obstacles to the preservation of cultural heritage, tourism, facilities, infrastructure, and ineffective management are common problems in cultural heritage tourism areas. The difference between this study and previous studies is the theory used and the preservation of cultural heritage managed by the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office.

The Concept of Cultural Heritage Preservation in the Context of Public Policy

Public policy in the field of culture prioritizes the preservation of cultural heritage, which emphasizes the protection of the social, archaeological, and historical values of society. As stipulated in Law No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, preservation in Indonesia includes three main components: protection, development, and utilization. According to Iswanto (2019), cultural heritage is considered not only as historical artifacts, but also as a living heritage that helps strengthen national identity and supports culture-based sustainable development.

In the domain of public policy, cultural heritage preservation can be understood as the result of relationships between various parties participating in the system of government and society. The concept of heritage governance, namely governance of preservation that prioritizes sustainability, collaboration, and transparency, is highly relevant here (Graham, Ashworth, & Tunbridge, 2016).

These dynamics shape the conservation policy of Sunyaragi Cave, one of Cirebon's cultural icons. Built by the Cirebon Sultanate in the 17th century, this site faces many problems due to urbanization, large numbers of tourists, and a lack of communication between institutions. Therefore, the success of conservation policy depends not only on how strong the regulations themselves are, but also on how well they are implemented in the field.

Public Policy Implementation from a Theoretical Perspective

The main conceptual framework of this study is public policy implementation theory. According to Edwards III (1980), four main factors influence the success of policy implementation: communication, resources, implementer disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The extent to which policy messages are communicated to implementers is very important. Adequate funding, personnel, and facilities constitute resources. Disposition indicates that implementers have the desire and commitment to achieve policy objectives. Meanwhile, the flexibility and coordination of program implementation are determined by the bureaucratic structure.

These four components are often interrelated in cultural heritage preservation. For example, a lack of budget and human resources at the local level often hinders clear policy-making (Setiyawan & Nuraini, 2021). Meanwhile, due to differences in institutional interests, coordination between agencies such as the Culture and Tourism Office, the Cultural Heritage Preservation Center, and the royal palace is often ineffective.

To understand how field implementers (e.g., civil servants, caretakers, or site managers) influence the final outcome of policies, it is important to consider the Street-Level Bureaucracy approach proposed by Lipsky (1980), in addition to Edwards III's theory. In facing public demands and resource constraints, they have many options. Thus, the social dynamics and daily decisions of actors at the grassroots level also influence the preservation of cultural heritage sites such as Sunyaragi Cave.

Cultural Heritage Preservation Policy in Indonesia

Law No. 11 of 2010, which emphasizes the importance of preserving cultural heritage as part of national identity, was followed by several derivative policies, such as Government Regulation No. 1 of 2022 concerning National Registration of Cultural Heritage and Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 106 of 2013 concerning Procedures for Determining Cultural Heritage.

Local regulations (Perda) and the Master Plan for Cultural Heritage Preservation (RIPCB) regulate preservation at the local level. Cirebon City Regulation No. 14 of 2017 concerning Cultural Heritage Preservation is the legal basis for protecting and utilizing historical sites such as Sunyaragi Cave, Kasepuhan Palace, and Kanoman Palace. However, many studies show that the implementation of regulations is often administrative in nature and does not take into account important aspects such as the economic sustainability of cultural sites and community capacity building. In addition, preservation is not integrated into urban spatial planning and there is a lack of coordination between local governments and vertical institutions such as the BPCB (Nugraha, 2021). One of the main focuses of this study is implementation gaps, which aim to understand why policies that already have a strong legal basis still face challenges at the implementation level.

Cultural Heritage Preservation and Community Participation

Cultural preservation emphasizes that community participation is essential for successful preservation (Smith, 2006; Waterton & Watson, 2013). Participatory methods enable communities to become subjects of preservation rather than objects of policy. As they are the guardians of traditional knowledge and have a direct interest in the sustainability of Sunyaragi Cave, the participation of local communities has strategic value. Arifin (2020) researched in Yogyakarta that community participation in preserving historical sites reduces the level of destruction and increases a sense of ownership. However, community involvement is often only symbolic and does not involve decision-making in many places, such as Cirebon (Suryani & Kurniawan, 2022).

As a result, this study proposes a collaborative governance model for preservation, in which the community, government, and traditional institutions such as the Keraton have equal roles. This method is in line with the principle of Preservation as a Process (Smith, 2006), which states that preservation is not only about protecting physical objects but also preserving the social meanings and values that live within the community. Previous studies on cultural heritage preservation in Indonesia have focused on normative and administrative aspects. For example, Lestari's (2018) research on the preservation of Borobudur Temple shows that physical conservation policies are more effective, but social aspects such as community participation are less considered. Similarly, research conducted by Nugraha (2021) on the management of Cultural Heritage in Semarang found that urban spatial planning and preservation policies were not fully integrated.

A study conducted by Hidayat (2020) on how the Kasepuhan Palace is managed shows that there is an overlap of power between the government and members of the Palace. This is especially true in Cirebon. However, there is still very little research that specifically investigates the implementation of the Sunyaragi Cave preservation policy using public policy implementation theory. Using the frameworks of Edwards III (1980) and Lipsky (1980), this study will fill this gap by focusing on the process of policy implementation at the local level. This study will also seek to identify the components that support and hinder policy implementation in the field.

This study offers new empirical contributions to research on policy implementation in the cultural sector and expands theoretical understanding of heritage governance in the context of local government. As previous research findings have shown, cultural heritage preservation in Indonesia still faces regulatory, institutional, and social problems. Regulations are comprehensive, but they are not well enforced, causing many cultural sites to be threatened with destruction. Policies in the field are often ineffective due to a hierarchical and uncoordinated bureaucratic structure.

To address these differences, this study analyzes how local parties implement the Sunyaragi Cave conservation policy; the obstacles that arise in terms of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure; and how a model of government cooperation can improve conservation in the future. Theoretically, this study adds to the literature on policy implementation

involving cultural contexts, which has been largely overlooked in Indonesian public administration research. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide input for local governments and relevant agencies in formulating more inclusive and sustainable conservation strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted as a case study using a qualitative approach. The purpose of this study was to comprehensively understand the process of implementing public policy in cultural heritage preservation, with an emphasis on the meaning, perceptions, and social dynamics that occur in the field (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews and observations. Interviews and observations were used to obtain in-depth information on the issues that arose, while observations were conducted to directly understand the implementation of public policy in the preservation of cultural heritage: A case study of the management of Sunyaragi Cave in the city of Cirebon.

This study focuses on the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave in Cirebon City, directly confirming the research objective, which is to examine how cultural preservation policies are implemented at the local level through collaboration between actors. The objective of this research is to reveal the dynamics of the implementation of preservation policies involving key informants, namely the Sunyaragi Cave Water Park Management Agency (BPTAGS) as the technical manager of the site and the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office as the regulatory authority, as well as to see how the coordination between the two contributes to the sustainability of the historical, architectural, and social values of Sunyaragi Cave.

Data analysis techniques were carried out using descriptive analysis, which allowed researchers to describe and analyze data systematically, providing a better understanding of the implementation of public policy in cultural heritage preservation: a case study of the management of Sunyaragi Cave in Cirebon City. According to Lexy J. Moleong (2017), data analysis organizes data into categories that facilitate the formulation of hypotheses so that there is data processing.

The data validity technique applied in this study is triangulation, which involves comparing data obtained from various sources and methods to verify the consistency of findings. According to Sugiyono (2015:83), data triangulation is a data collection technique that combines various existing data and sources.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The implementation of public policy for the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave in Cirebon City involves many aspects of change, including formal regulations, institutional capacity, and community involvement. The main findings include limitations in human resources and funding, the compatibility of field practices with national and regional regulations, and the important role of the private and local sectors in supporting the sustainability of conservation. The purpose of the field practice section is to thoroughly describe the empirical research results, examine their relationship with theory and literature on public

policy implementation, and evaluate how implementation affects the preservation of cultural heritage sites. In terms of policy, the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave is governed by Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage, local regulations of the city of Cirebon, and a strategic plan for site management developed by the Department of Culture and Tourism.

Based on an interview with Mr. Jajat Sudrajat, Head of the Sunyaragi Cave Water Park Management Agency (BPTAGS) on Saturday, November 29, 2025. He stated that regulations emphasize physical conservation, administrative management, and community commitment to cultural preservation. However, there are differences between field practices and formal regulations, particularly in terms of maintenance requirements, the amount of supervision carried out, and community participation in decision-making. Regulations on the Preservation of the Sunyaragi Cave Cultural Heritage Site are essentially legal rules established to ensure that historical and cultural heritage remains intact, undamaged, and can be passed on to future generations. These rules bind all parties, including the government, the community, and cultural asset owners, to take responsibility for caring for and protecting historical sites.

Based on an interview with Mrs. Elin Marlina (Cultural Advisor/Head of the History, Cultural Heritage, and Museum Team, Culture Division) from the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office, she stated that the implementation of preservation policies is carried out through the application of regulations, area management, and the involvement of various related parties. The implementation of policies in Cirebon City aims not only to enforce laws and regulations, but also to preserve the city's identity and ensure that the heritage of its ancestors, especially Sunyaragi Cave, can continue to be utilized and enjoyed by the community and future generations.

Research results prove that site managers, the government, and the private sector collaborate to improve policy implementation. The government is responsible for regulations and supervision, while the private sector contributes through marketing and providing additional funds. This concept of governance that emphasizes cultural preservation, which focuses on coordination, accountability, and transparency, is strongly supported by interactions between various actors (Kusuma Sari et al. (2020)). Research shows that multi-stakeholder involvement increases the effectiveness of implementation, strengthens sustainability, and reduces the likelihood of conflict. These findings are in line with previous research (Berman (1978)) which emphasizes that cooperation between actors is crucial for the successful implementation of public policy, particularly in the context of cultural preservation.

According to data from interviews based on George Edward III's (1978) theoretical analysis, the implementation of the Sunyaragi Cave preservation policy can be categorized as not yet fully effective and optimal. The aspects of communication and disposition of the implementers show positive trends, especially in terms of the commitment of the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office and the site managers. However, limited resources and a bureaucratic structure that is not yet optimal are the main factors hindering the achievement of a fully effective policy implementation. This confirms that the success of

cultural heritage preservation does not only depend on the existence of regulations, but also on institutional capacity, the quality of coordination between stakeholders, and adequate resource support.

Through the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave, the community has become more aware of local cultural values and strengthened their community identity. The sense of belonging created by cultural and educational activities involving residents enhances the community's role as a protector of culture. According to research by Hermawan et al. (2024), the existence of the Sunyaragi Cave Tourist Park has a significant impact on the social and economic dynamics of the surrounding community. Improvements in the quality of facilities and infrastructure have also encouraged growth in the number of tourists.

Research shows that there is a relatively strong legal basis at the national and regional levels for implementing policies to preserve the Sunyaragi Cave Cultural Heritage Site in Cirebon City. The main laws supporting the preservation of this site are Law No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, Cirebon City Regulation No. 14 of 2017, and the Mayor's Decree.

Research shows that policy implementation has not been entirely successful, particularly in terms of coordination between actors, resource constraints, and low community participation. This supports previous research findings that indicate the main problem in cultural heritage preservation in Indonesia is poor local policy implementation, not a lack of regulations (Nugraha, 2021; Lubis et al., 2024).

Several important parties within the organization are responsible for the management of Sunyaragi Cave, including: the Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office, which acts as a supervisor and policy advocate; the Sunyaragi Cave Water Park Management Agency (BPTAGS), which acts as the technical and operational manager; the Kasepuhan Palace, which is the historical and symbolic owner of the site; and the cultural community and local community, which act as supporters of preservation. Although the relationships between these actors are still partial and not yet well structured, they form a collaborative governance pattern. From this explanation, the results of the researcher's analysis of the Implementation of the Edwards III Policy Model are as follows:

Communication

Policy communication is very important for the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave. The interview results show that only formal actors such as the Culture and Tourism Office and BPTAGS truly understand the preservation policy information. Meanwhile, the surrounding community and local economic actors such as informal traders and tour guides still lack understanding of the objectives, rules, and restrictions of cultural heritage preservation. This condition shows that the policy message is not being transmitted well and is unclear. Edwards III (1980) states that unclear communication can interfere with policy implementation. Often, policies are considered "top-down" rather than a shared need due to the lack of regular discussion forums between the government and the community. These findings are in line with the study by Suryani and Kurniawan (2022), which states that the lack of policy communication weakens the community's sense of ownership of cultural sites.

Resources

The results of the study show that limited resources are the main obstacle to the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave. These limitations include: insufficient maintenance budgets for long-term physical conservation; limited human resources, especially professional caretakers and conservators; and a lack of additional facilities and infrastructure, such as educational information facilities and systems for monitoring building conditions. Due to these limitations, conservation efforts have focused more on tourism than on sustainable conservation. This supports the findings of Setiyawan and Nuraini (2021) that local governments often have to choose between preservation and increasing revenue due to a lack of resources. Well-planned policies will not succeed without adequate resource support, according to Edwards III (1980). At Sunyaragi Cave, the mismatch between management responsibilities and resource capacity is a significant structural problem.

Disposition

The views and obligations of implementers on the research results show that technical policy implementers have a fairly high normative commitment to the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave. This can be seen from BPTAGS's efforts to keep the area clean, limit activities that could damage the site, and hold regular cultural activities. However, adequate authority and policy support are not yet available to fully support this commitment. In some situations, field implementers must make discretionary decisions to balance tourism needs and conservation principles. Below the street-level bureaucracy, field policy implementers have considerable freedom because there are no clear operational rules (Lipsky, 1980), which explains this phenomenon. If not accompanied by good oversight and coordination, this discretion can foster innovation, but it can also lead to policy inconsistencies.

Bureaucratic Structure

The preservation system for Sunyaragi Cave is still organized hierarchically and by sector. The Department of Culture and Tourism, BPTAGS, the Cultural Preservation Center, and the Palace have not been working together effectively. The lack of consistent standard operating procedures (SOPs) among the various offices has led to overlapping authority and slowed down the decision-making process. The results are in line with the research by Suryono (2025) and Basil (2025), which shows that one of the main obstacles in the preservation of cultural heritage sites in Indonesia is weak coordination between agencies. Preservation policies must be integrated with spatial planning and urban development due to the inflexible bureaucratic structure. According to this study, the principles of government cooperation suggested by Ansell and Gash (2008) have not been fully implemented in the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave.

Community involvement is still limited to economic activities and cultural ceremonies, and does not extend to strategic planning and decision-making processes. Nevertheless, community participation has great potential to ensure

sustainable preservation through social oversight, cultural value transfer, and community-based tourism development. This supports Smith's (2006) idea that cultural preservation should be viewed as a social process rather than merely a technical conservation effort. This model will place the community, local government, and customary institutions such as the Keraton in equal and complementary positions. Theoretically, this research expands research on public policy implementation by incorporating local cultural heritage and cultural context. This is a topic that has received little attention in public administration research in Indonesia. A more comprehensive understanding of policy dynamics at the local level is obtained by combining the theories of Edwards III and Lipsky.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussions of research on the implementation of public policy in the preservation of the Sunyaragi Cave Cultural Heritage Site in the city of Cirebon, it can be concluded that there is a strong basis for the preservation of this site, both at the national and regional levels. However, the law has not been fully and effectively implemented at the local level. Therefore, the main problem in the preservation of Sunyaragi Cave is policy implementation, not incompatibility.

According to research conducted using George C. Edwards III's policy implementation model, there are a number of significant challenges in policy implementation. In terms of communication, the dissemination of policies to the community and local actors has been ineffective. As a result, understanding and awareness of the importance of cultural heritage preservation remains limited. In terms of resources, budget constraints, experienced human resources in conservation, and supporting facilities are major obstacles to sustainable preservation. Policy implementers at the technical level, on the other hand, show a very high level of commitment in terms of disposition, but due to the lack of clear operational guidelines, they often have to use their discretion. From a bureaucratic structure perspective, coordination between relevant agencies is not yet well integrated. As a result, there is an overlap of authority and a lack of management effectiveness.

This study shows that the principle of collaborative governance has not been fully implemented in the management of Sunyaragi Cave conservation. The community and traditional institutions are still minimally involved and have not been substantively involved in the planning and decision-making processes. As a result, this study emphasizes that strengthening a collaborative governance model that involves local government, site managers, the royal palace, and local communities on an equal footing is essential for inclusive, sustainable cultural heritage conservation that focuses on protecting historical values and community welfare.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies are recommended to examine the implementation of collaborative governance models in cultural heritage preservation using comparative or multi-site approaches to identify best practices. Further research could also explore community participation mechanisms, the role of local

traditions and institutions, and the development of clear operational guidelines to strengthen effective, inclusive, and sustainable policy implementation at the local level.

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