

Research Article

The Role of Community Leaders in Prevention and Management of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Tilamuta District, Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo Province

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Abstract.

The objective of this study is to examine the involvement of community leaders in the prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pentadu Barat Village, Tilamuta Subdistrict, during the year 2021. The study utilizes a qualitative descriptive research methodology. The research findings indicate that the prevention and mitigation measures in Pentadu Barat Village were effectively implemented under the leadership of community leaders, particularly within the local community of Pentadu Barat Village. The community has been encouraged to adhere to social distancing measures, while efforts have been made to convene the community and disseminate information regarding the risks associated with COVID-19. Additionally, comprehensive awareness programs were implemented to educate individuals on preventive and mitigative measures.

Keywords: role, community leaders, Gorontalo province

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Published 16 May 2025

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICORSIA 2024 Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

The term “role” is a sociological concept first introduced by prominent thinkers and scholars who have produced classical works, such as George Herbert Mead, Ralph Linton, and Jacob Moreno, during the 1930s and 1940s. Through his symbolic interactionist perspective, Mead focused on factors within individual roles, the evolution of roles through social interaction, and various cognitive concepts whereby social actors can understand and interpret behavioural guidelines for themselves and others. In contrast, Linton used a structural approach to explain that a well-established social system is characterized by the behaviour of an individual occupying a particular social position. Subsequently, “role” became the foundation for the creation of normative behaviours that are strongly adhered to and serve as the basis for one’s conduct; this is the role



that possesses its concept. On the other hand, Moreno held contrasting views on the relationship between role expectations and behaviour. He saw expectations arising from social conditions and assessed how an individual perceives the expectations of others and understands their influence on that behaviour¹.

According to Law No. 8 of 1987, a community leader is someone who, due to their social status, receives honour from the community or the government. The position of a community leader is attained by individuals based on their knowledge, wisdom, moral character, and success within the community. The wisdom and knowledge possessed by community leaders often serve as a guide for individuals aligned with their respective fields of expertise².

The knowledge of community leaders about COVID-19 shapes their attitudes in the effort to prevent COVID-19. The knowledge and attitudes of community leaders drive them to take action, which involves disseminating information about COVID-19 prevention methods to the community and urging them to adhere to health protocols. The attitudes and actions of community leaders simultaneously illustrate their active role in preventing and controlling the pandemic in their area³.

The role of community leaders needs to be more satisfactory, but the preventive behaviour is good. This situation arises because many associate COVID-19 with negative aspects such as being contagious, dangerous, and deadly, which can influence individuals to change their behaviour to prevent COVID-19. Additionally, information related to COVID-19, the increasing number of cases, and death rates displayed on social media, television, posters, and banners can enhance individuals' self-awareness and encourage them to adopt better preventive behaviours for COVID-19. Despite the less satisfactory role of community leaders, there is a positive shift in preventive behaviour⁴.

1.1. Problem Formulation

Based on the issues mentioned above, it is crucial to understand the role of community leaders in preventing and mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic in the West Pentadu Village, Tilamuta Sub-district, in the year 2021.

1.2. Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to analyze the role of community leaders in the prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the West Pentadu Village, Tilamuta Sub-district, in the year 2021.

1.3. Research Benefits

Based on the research mentioned above objective, the benefits of this study are as follows:

1.4. Theoretical Benefits

As input for developing scientific knowledge obtained in the field, it can provide us with personal experience. It can also offer unique insights into educational knowledge amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5. Practical Benefits

This research is expected to provide input to enhance the experience of researching the COVID-19 pandemic in Pentadu Barat Village, Tilamuta Sub-district, especially the role of community leaders in the village.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Definition of Role

Ralph Linton argues that a role is a dynamic aspect of a status. If someone fulfils their rights and obligations according to their position, they perform a role. Thus, roles and positions are inseparable, as they depend on each other. There is no role without a position, and vice versa; there is no position without a role. Each individual has a set of roles derived from various patterns in their social life. This indicates that roles determine what is done for society and what can be expected from society⁵.

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), “peran” (role) is a set of behaviours or behaviours expected to be possessed by individuals who hold a position

in society. An Indonesian sociologist, Soerjono Soekanto, also defines the role. According to him, a role is a dynamic process corresponding to a position (status). If someone fulfils their rights and obligations according to their position, they perform a role. As humans are social beings, roles are inseparable and must be carried out according to their position as social beings.

2.2. The Concept of Role

The role can be defined as a social position, behaviour associated with a social position, or distinctive behaviour. The term “role” has been present in European languages for centuries and has been used as a sociological concept, but it gained prominence in sociological discourse in the 1920s and 1930s. This prominence was particularly notable through the works of Mead, Moreno, and Linton. Mead introduced two concepts: “mind” and “self,” where the mind emerges through communication with others during childhood. Children then develop the capacity to extrapolate from communication. Initially, proponents of the role concept held varying assumptions about the concept. This is evident in their theoretical works: Anthropologists like Ralph Linton viewed roles as cultural units and tended to perceive role consistency across entire societies. For Talcott Parsons, roles belong to the social system and must be explained through the role expectations held by participants, supported by sanctions. G. H. Mead saw adopting roles as essential for socialization and self-development, while J. L. Moreno emphasized the significance of role-playing and the importance of this final process for education and psychotherapy.

Individuals generally possess and manage multiple roles. Roles determine the goals to be pursued, tasks to be accomplished, and performances required in specific scenarios or situations. Role theory asserts that much of everyday social behaviour can be observed through individuals enacting their roles, similar to how actors perform their roles on stage and football players on the field, which in reality can be predicted⁶.

2.3. Community Leaders

In community life, individuals are usually looked up to as sources of advice and solutions by other community members regarding matters considered problematic for themselves and their environment. This is one of the practices of community leaders. Having the skill to influence others and being wise in their actions are among the strengths of

community leaders. The development of community leaders is not solely based on formal bureaucratic power and authority, but they hold influence within both formal and informal sectors of the community's social structure. This role is closely tied to the important function that community leaders with significant influence hold. As a result, community leaders are highly respected and esteemed within their communities. According to the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 8 of 1987, Chapter 1 General Provisions Article 1 states that a Community Leader is "someone who, due to their social status, receives recognition from the community and the government."

The status obtained by community leaders results from the exceptional qualities of their personalities, knowledge, wisdom, good character, and success in their lives, which are highly regarded by the community. Due to these exceptional qualities, community members often view them as role models and individuals worthy of trust, according to their respective strengths and expertise. Community leaders are individuals whose presence is eagerly anticipated when resolving various community challenges.

2.4. Prevention and Handling of Covid-19

A pandemic is an infectious outbreak that spreads simultaneously across wide geographical areas. COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease, 2019) is spreading and infecting more than 1 million people worldwide. The emergence of the coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan, China, in early December 2019. Covid-19 is an infectious disease of the respiratory system caused by a newly discovered type of coronavirus in 2019. In the current situation, the coronavirus is not an epidemic that can be ignored. When observed based on its symptoms, the general public might mistake it for a common flu, but from a medical analysis, this virus is quite dangerous and lethal. In 2020, the spread of this virus has been significant as it has become a global phenomenon, impacting all countries, including Indonesia. Anticipatory measures and efforts to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases have been implemented across various regions in Indonesia.

Based on the data from the study on various types of occupations, an educational strategy is implemented by reaching out to the community door-to-door and providing understanding based on their respective occupations. General education is imparted about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination, along with offering solutions and motivation based on their concerns and reasons for not getting vaccinated.

The role of community leaders in educating the unvaccinated population emphasizes providing a fundamental understanding of the benefits of vaccination. According to the

Ministry of Health (2020) and WHO (2020), the primary role of vaccines is to prevent contagious diseases, offering defence and protection against various dangerous infectious diseases. Educating about vaccines as substances or compounds that help build immune responses is essential. Vaccines can stimulate the body to produce antibodies that can combat the infectious agents causing diseases.

In response to the development of the coronavirus, the government eventually implemented policies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through the following prevention and control measures.

2.5. Educating about COVID-19

Coronavirus is a group of viruses that can cause diseases in animals or humans. Some coronaviruses cause respiratory infections in humans, ranging from mild symptoms like the common cold to more serious conditions like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). A new type of coronavirus was discovered, causing the disease COVID-19. COVID-19 primarily spreads through respiratory droplets released by a person who coughs or exhibits other symptoms such as fever or fatigue.

2.6. Proper Handwashing Technique During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Washing hands with soap is recognized as one of the preventive measures against diseases, including COVID-19. All types of soap can be used for handwashing, whether regular, antiseptic, or liquid. However, antiseptic or antibacterial soaps are often promoted more in the public. The type of soap is not a crucial factor, as the virus causes Covid-19. Therefore, antibacterial hand soap does not provide additional advantages over other types of soap. Based on this, it is important to know the correct handwashing technique for preventing and controlling the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

2.7. Update on the Circular Letter Issued by the Government

Educating About Updates Regarding New Regulations as Stated in Circular Letters Issued by the Government. During the pandemic, the numerous circular letters issued by Indonesian ministries regarding regulations applicable to the community, especially

workers, businesses, employment, international affairs, health, and others, have covered topics such as working hours, rules for working in offices, and more⁷.

3. Research Methodology

This study will be conducted over three months, from preparing the research proposal to completing the thesis as the final outcome of this research. The research period is 1 month to obtain accurate data and observe field phenomena as research materials.

3.1. Research Location

This research is conducted in the village of Pentadu Barat, Tilamuta Sub-district, Boalemo Regency. There are several considerations for selecting this location. It is easy to obtain permission from both the Sub-district and Village government since the researcher is a resident of the village under study. Additionally, conducting research at this location is cost-effective for the researcher, as it reduces expenses. This also allows the researcher to be present more frequently for data collection. To date, there has been no research conducted on the topic of 'The Role of Community Leaders in Preventing and Combating the Covid-19 Pandemic in Pentadu Barat Village, Tilamuta Sub-district, Boalemo Regency.

3.2. Data Collections

There are three types of data collection techniques used in this research, namely: (1) Observation, (2) Interviews, and (3) Documentation. The elaboration of these three data collection techniques is provided below:

3.3. Observation

Observation can be defined as the systematic observation and recording of phenomena being investigated or studied. Researchers conduct direct field observations by systematically observing and recording issues related to the research problem. For instance, their activities during the cultural tradition of Jaton and their daily routines are observed. This is done to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and ensure the obtained data is accurate. The observation focuses on "The Role of Community Leaders

in Covid-19 Prevention and Mitigation in Pentadu Barat Village, Tilamuta Sub-district, Boalemo Regency". The aim is to gain an in-depth insight into the problem for accurate data collection.

3.4. Interview

The interview is a purposeful conversation. It involves a dialogue between two parties: the interviewer, who asks questions, and the interviewee, who provides answers to those questions.

3.5. Documentation

Documentation involves gathering data related to specific variables or aspects in the form of records, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, meeting minutes, agendas, and more. Documents are written or filmed sources categorized as sources from books and scientific journals, archival sources, personal documents, and official documents.

3.6. Data Resources

Data sources refer to the subjects from which data can be obtained. In this data collection, the researcher draws from two data sources, which are:

3.7. Primary Data

The data obtained directly from the community, collected through interviews, observations, and other tools, constitute the primary data for this research. The primary data in this study are obtained through direct interviews with informants who can provide data to the researcher. Before conducting interviews, the researcher purposively selects a key informant. The key informant for this study is Mr. Daud Dukalang, S.Pd, the Village Head of Tilamuta Subdistrict, Boalemo Regency. He was chosen as the key informant because he was the Village Head.

3.8. Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to data obtained from library materials. These library materials are necessary to complement, explain, and interpret the primary data acquired from the research. Secondary data serves as supporting data in this study and is obtained from relevant institutions/agencies. Secondary data can come from library materials such as books, journals, theses, newspapers, and references related to this research.

3.9. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study takes place simultaneously with data collection. During data analysis, the researcher records it directly as a research report. The steps taken in the data analysis technique are as follows:

3.10. Data Reduction

Data reduction involves the selection, concentration, and emphasis on simplifying and transforming raw data from field notes and written sources to facilitate a better understanding of the collected data.

3.11. Data Presentation

Data presentation is a collection of organized information that allows for drawing conclusions and taking action. Thus, it enables a clearer depiction of the whole or specific aspects of the researched topic.

3.12. Conclusion or Verification

Conclusion or verification is a part of a comprehensive configuration activity. This conclusion is drawn based on an understanding of the presented data and is formulated in concise and easily understandable statements referring to the core issues examined.

4. Research Result and Discussion

4.1. Collaborative Work Group in Pandemic Prevention in Pentadu Barat Village

Work Groups Play a Vital Role in COVID-19 Prevention and Mitigation to Avoid Transmission. This Leads Them to Form Task Forces to Prevent and Address COVID-19.

“Coincidentally, in Desa Pentadu Barat, we naturally address the issue of COVID-19. We have a budget allocated for COVID-19 prevention, and we implement this budget to carry out prevention measures. We have formed a COVID volunteer task force for the various groups in Desa Pentadu Barat, each with specific responsibilities in handling and preventing the situation.”

From the explanation above, it is evident that Desa Pentadu Barat has a collaborative group during the COVID-19 pandemic called the “COVID task force team,” which is responsible for prevention and mitigation measures. The task force is led by the village head, with the deputy being the head of the Village Consultative Board (BPD). This collaboration extends to various levels, involving entities from the sub-district, health centre, and district level. This collaborative group aims to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus.

4.2. The establishment of the Task Force Team in Desa Pentadu Barat

The central government has issued a series of regulations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, which are periodically released on the official website of the COVID-19 Handling Acceleration Task Force. This is in line with the responsibilities of Provincial/City/District Governments to convey information on the prevention and control of COVID-19 to the entire population using various available communication channels.

4.3. The Role of Community Leaders in the Prevention and Control of Covid-19

In society, individuals are often considered as sources of advice and solutions by other community members regarding matters that are deemed problematic for themselves and their environment. This is one of the roles of community leaders. Having the ability to influence others and demonstrating wisdom in their actions are among the strengths

possessed by community leaders. The development of community leaders is based on more than formal bureaucratic power and authority. Instead, their influence extends across the social structure's formal and informal sectors. The significance of community leaders' roles is rooted in their substantial impact on the community, regardless of their official position or authority.

"In the prevention and control efforts in Pentadu Barat Village, community leaders collaborate with the Village Government to conduct public awareness campaigns. These campaigns are related to the COVID-19 regulations issued by the government."

Based on the interview findings, the role of community leaders includes encouraging the community to participate in Prevention and Control Awareness, Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS), and the Healthy Community Movement (GERMAS). With the implementation of these three preventive measures, Pentadu Barat Village is well-maintained and informed about the Health Protocol regulations.

4.4. Societal interaction within Pentadu Barat Village

Socialization is a lifelong process through which an individual learns the habits, ways of life, values, and social norms prevalent in a society to be accepted by its community.

4.5. The practice of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviour within the community of Pentadu Barat Village

The educational activities on Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (CHLB), as well as the distribution of necessities conducted in Pentadu Barat Village, are aimed at fulfilling essential needs and providing knowledge and skills to independently practice clean living behaviours, thereby enabling individuals to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

4.6. The Community Health Movement in Pentadu Barat

The Healthy Living Community Movement (GERMAS) program initiated by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia is an effort to address current health issues by promoting a culture of clean and healthy living within the community. GERMAS introduces seven steps towards a healthy lifestyle, which include engaging in physical activities, consuming fruits and vegetables, refraining from smoking, avoiding alcohol

consumption, undergoing regular health check-ups, maintaining a healthy environment, and using proper sanitation facilities. The implementation of GERMAS by the community is expected to tackle Indonesia's triple burden of diseases, including infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, and emerging preventable cases.

4.7. The Role Of Religious Leaders in Pentadu Barat Village

The role of religious leaders in their field has made them exemplary figures and role models for the community, and this is one of the forms of potential they possess.

“The role of religious leaders in preventing COVID-19 is that it is always advised to wear masks, wash hands, and maintain social distance. However, to tackle this as local religious figures, we must return to the divine nature of the afflictions bestowed upon us by Allah SWT. COVID-19 is a test from Allah SWT, reminding us always to be mindful of it and as a reminder that this world is ageing, and all viruses and other disasters will befall humanity if we continue to neglect environmental protection and disregard religious commands.”

From the results of the interview with religious leaders, the role of Religious Figures in preventing COVID-19 is always emphasized, including wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining social distance. However, in our efforts as local religious figures to address this, we must return to the inherent nature of afflictions bestowed by Allah SWT. Covid-19 is a test from Allah SWT, serving as a reminder for us to always keep it in mind and as an admonition that this world is ageing. All viruses and other disasters will affect humanity if we continuously neglect environmental precautions and disregard the teachings of our religion.

4.8. The Influence Of Pandemic Prevention And Control Measures On The Community Of Pentadu Barat Villages

Entering the phase of adapting to the new normal, implementing health protocol rules to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community is crucial. The new normal adaptation involves adopting new healthy lifestyles to prevent the spread and contraction of the Covid-19 virus. The community must follow the health protocols established by the government, especially for all public activities allowed in certain sectors with specific requirements.

“In our village, prevention measures are well maintained according to the guidance of the head of Pentadu Barat Village. Under his guidance, Pentadu Barat Village has implemented strategies that effectively safeguard the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, has any group or village authority provided information and socialization about COVID-19 in Pentadu Barat Village? Alhamdulillah (Praise be to God), in Pentadu Barat Village, there is a team composed of village authorities and a collaboration with the local health centre that provides socialization about COVID-19. With this socialization, we as the community can become informed and adhere to health protocols, thereby protecting ourselves from this dangerous COVID-19. The role of community leaders in preventing and mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic in our community has been highly effective. We are very satisfied with the prevention and intervention efforts carried out by community leaders. They have formed a task force team, established information centres and conducted socialization efforts. This proactive approach has played a significant role in keeping our community safe and informed during these challenging times.”

The community of Pentadu Barat Village feels very secure with the prevention and mitigation efforts, as they are aligned with the guidance of the head of Pentadu Barat Village. The head of the village has also established a special task force to protect the community from the COVID-19 outbreak. The Village Chief of Pentadu Barat has directed the village authorities to conduct socialization activities to inform the community about the outbreak's origin and how to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic. The Village Chief's proactive approach has extended to ensuring that each household receives informative stickers. These stickers are intended to raise awareness and understanding among the residents. They contain visual instructions on proper handwashing techniques, maintaining safe distances, wearing masks, and using hand sanitisers. The intention behind these stickers is to encourage the community to adhere to health protocols.

“In our village, prevention and mitigation efforts are somewhat ordinary. The Village Chief has to protect and safeguard the community from the Covid-19 pandemic. They should truly focus on prevention because by doing so, we, as a community, can avoid the outbreak of this disease. Is any group or village authorities providing socialization about COVID-19 in Pentadu Barat Village? In our village, there have been some efforts to provide socialization about prevention and mitigation measures. However, it may not be sufficient. Many community members could not attend these sessions due to their busy schedules. I suggest that community leaders visit each household directly. This

way, they can provide the necessary socialization and information about the pandemic, ensuring that everyone understands what COVID-19 is.”

From the interview results above, the residents of Pentadu Barat Village are not yet satisfied with the prevention and mitigation efforts carried out by community leaders. This is because they perceive the COVID-19 pandemic as highly dangerous, and no single individual can prevent it unless the pandemic disappears. Despite the efforts of community leaders in prevention and mitigation, more is needed. Mr Soman mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted society across various layers and sectors of life. The impacts felt by the community are not limited to the public health sector but also extend to other sectors such as the economy, education, social aspects, and more.

According to the researcher, it can be concluded that there is dissatisfaction among the community regarding the prevention and mitigation efforts carried out by community leaders, both in terms of preventive behaviour and mitigation. This dissatisfaction may stem from the need for more understanding among the community about the dangers of Covid-19. It can be observed that community leaders are fulfilling their roles effectively by establishing task forces, conducting socialization and education, promoting clean and healthy living behaviours (PHBS), and implementing the Healthy Community Program (GERMAS). These efforts aim to ensure that the residents of Pentadu Barat Village adhere to the established health protocols. The researcher's findings highlight factors that contribute to the community's dissatisfaction with the efforts of the Pentadu Barat Village government. Many community members do not attend the village's socialization activities, preferring to have the socialization conducted directly in their homes. This preference for home-based socialization may contribute to the perceived dissatisfaction among the residents.

5. Conclusion

The role of community leaders in Pentadu Barat Village is paramount, as they hold significant influence within the community. In essence, community leaders are individuals who wield considerable authority in a societal group and possess the power to influence people and groups according to their intentions. The roles of these community leaders include acting as social controllers, guardians of values and norms, and solvers of various issues that arise within the community.

One of the chief roles of community leaders is to serve as social regulators, upholding and enforcing prevailing values and norms. Additionally, they play a vital role in resolving various societal problems. Community leaders should provide the community with support, guidance, motivation, and direction. They function as support pillars, providing essential assistance and guidance to community members. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, community leaders in Pentadu Barat Village have undertaken significant efforts to prevent the spread of the virus. They have established task forces to ensure the virus does not propagate further. To this end, preventive activities have been initiated, such as establishing a COVID-19 readiness post in the village hall of Pentadu Barat, direct educational outreach, and distributing informational leaflets. These efforts serve as forms of promotion to enhance the community's awareness and understanding of COVID-19 in Pentadu Barat Village.

6. Suggestion

It is expected that community leaders will pay careful attention and be resolute in their efforts to prevent and mitigate the entry of individuals from outside Pentadu Barat Village to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease. Community leaders are expected to safeguard the village's residents from the COVID-19 outbreak, ensuring that none of the community members are exposed to this disease.

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