The Narrative of Morality And Media Discourse in the Closure of Payo Sigadung Red-Light District: A Literature and News Analysis

Nurhasanah[1], Abdul Malik [2]

[1][2] Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Indonesia

[1]nurhasanah@uinjambi.ac.id; [2]abdulmalik.30221003@gmail.com

Abstract

This research analyzes the narratives of morality and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014, as well as its impact on sex workers and the surrounding community. Through a literature review and media analysis, the study reveals that the closure was dominated by conservative moral narratives in media coverage, which tended to simplify prostitution as solely a moral issue. Media outlets such as *Kompas* and *Jambi Express* portrayed the closure as a victory for religious values, while *The Jakarta Post* attempted to provide a more humanistic perspective by highlighting the impact on sex workers. The closure of the red-light district caused many sex workers to lose their primary source of income and struggle to find alternative employment, while the local community experienced a decline in economic income. The government's ambiguous response—closing the red-light district but failing to provide an effective reintegration program—worsened the situation. This study concludes that the closure of red-light districts requires a holistic approach, including economic empowerment, human rights protection, and a paradigm shift in media discourse. The research recommendations include skills training programs, healthcare services, and anti-stigma campaigns to support former sex workers.

Key Words: Morality narratives, media discourse, red-light district closure of Payo Sigadung, prostitution, socio-economic impact.

Introduction

The closure of red-light districts is often a controversial issue involving various social actors, including the government, religious organizations, the media, and the general public.

One prominent case is the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in Jambi, which was framed within discourses of morality and social regulation. Payo Sigadung was an area long known as a center for prostitution and experienced various social dynamics before it was eventually closed by the local government. The closure process was influenced by moral constructions shaped by social actors, including how the media packaged and disseminated these discourses to the public.

Payo Sigadung, also known as "Pucuk," was a former red-light district in Jambi City. Payo Sigadung had operated for several decades and was one of the most well-known red-light districts in Sumatra, particularly in Jambi. According to some local reports, this red-light district had existed since the 1980s or even earlier and was an organized prostitution area with a relatively structured management system. Located in Jambi City, Indonesia, Payo Sigadung had been a focal point of public and media attention for decades. As one of the red-light districts, Payo Sigadung not only symbolized the complexity of social issues but also reflected the evolving dynamics of morality, public policy, and media discourse. The closure of this red-light district in 2014 by the local government marked a new chapter in debates about morality, human rights, and the role of media in shaping public opinion. This research aims to analyze the narratives of morality and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district, focusing on how these issues were constructed and disseminated through media coverage.

Prostitution, as a controversial social phenomenon, is often the subject of moral and ethical debates. On one hand, prostitution is seen as a violation of the prevailing social and religious norms in Indonesia, while on the other hand, there are arguments highlighting the rights of sex workers as citizens who need protection (Weitzer, 2010). The closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014 is often associated with morality narratives rooted in religious values and social norms, sparking broader discussions about how the state and society should address issues related to public morality. In this context, the media plays a crucial role as a channel of information and a shaper of public opinion. Media not only reports facts but also frames specific events from perspectives that can influence how the public perceives an issue (Entman, 1993).

Media discourse surrounding the closure of Payo Sigadung reflects the tension between conservative morality narratives and a more humanistic approach toward sex workers. Some media outlets tend to emphasize the negative aspects of prostitution, such as exploitation and moral violations, while others attempt to provide space for the voices of sex workers, who are often marginalized in public discussions (Suryakusuma, 2012). These differences in framing not only affect public perception but also influence government policies. For example, media coverage that focuses excessively on moral aspects without considering socio-economic contexts can lead to repressive policies that fail to address the root of the problem (Ditjen PP & PA, 2014).

Furthermore, the closure of Payo Sigadung in 2014 also highlights the role of media in shaping narratives about "moral cleansing" and "social order." Media often uses sensational and dramatic language to portray the closure of the red-light district as a moral victory over social disorder. However, such narratives tend to overlook the complexity of the issue and the

socio-economic impacts experienced by former sex workers and the surrounding community. Previous studies have shown that the closure of red-light districts is often not followed by sustainable solutions for sex workers, such as skills training or social reintegration (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005). Therefore, it is important to analyze how the media frames this issue and its implications for public policy and the lives of sex workers.

This research uses a literature review and media analysis approach to uncover the narratives of morality and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014. By examining relevant media texts and literature, this study aims to understand how issues of morality and prostitution are constructed and how these narratives influence public policy and societal perceptions. Through this analysis, it is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between media, morality, and social policy in Indonesia.

Literature Review

Prostitution and red-light districts as social phenomena have been the subject of extensive research across various disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, media studies, and public policy. The Payo Sigadung red-light district, which operated in Jambi City, Indonesia, is one such case that is particularly interesting to study due to its complexity, involving aspects of morality, economics, and social policy. The closure of this red-light district in 2014 became a pivotal moment that sparked widespread discussions about how the state and society respond to the issue of prostitution. This literature review will discuss three main themes: (1) prostitution as a socio-economic phenomenon, (2) the role of media in framing moral issues, and (3) the impact of the closure of red-light districts on sex workers and the community.

Prostitution as a Socio-Economic Phenomenon

Prostitution is often viewed as a moral issue, but its root causes cannot be separated from socio-economic contexts. According to Weitzer (2010), prostitution is a result of economic inequality, poverty, and lack of access to education and decent employment. In Indonesia, red-light districts like Payo Sigadung emerged in response to the economic needs of the lower class. Many sex workers in this red-light district come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and see prostitution as the only way to meet their basic needs (Ditjen PP & PA, 2014). A study by Lim (1998) also shows that prostitution in Southeast Asia is often linked to internal migration, where women from rural areas move to cities in search of work but end up trapped in the sex industry due to a lack of alternatives.

However, prostitution is not just about economics; it is also about power dynamics and gender. Suryakusuma (2012), in her book *State Ibuism*, explains how the social construction of women in Indonesia often places them in subordinate positions. This makes women vulnerable to exploitation, including in the sex industry. On the other hand, prostitution is also seen as a form of agency by some sex workers who choose this profession as a way to control their economic lives (Agustina, 2013). Nevertheless, the social stigma attached to sex

workers often marginalizes them, making it difficult for them to access healthcare, education, and legal protection.

The Role of Media in Framing Moral Issues

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of prostitution and the closure of red-light districts. According to Entman (1993), media framing is the process by which media selects certain aspects of reality to highlight, thereby influencing how audiences understand an issue. In the context of the closure of Payo Sigadung, media tended to use conservative moral narratives, portraying the closure as a victory of religious values and social norms over moral disorder (*Kompas*, 2014). Such framing overlooks the complexity of the issue and tends to simplify prostitution as merely a moral problem.

On the other hand, some media outlets attempted to provide a more humanistic perspective by highlighting the impact of the closure on sex workers. For example, coverage in *The Jakarta Post* (2014) featured the voices of sex workers expressing their concerns about their future after the closure of the red-light district. However, such narratives are often overshadowed by more sensational moralistic framing. A study by Tapsell (2017) on media in Indonesia shows that media tends to follow the agendas of the government and religious groups when framing controversial issues like prostitution. This creates bias in reporting and influences public policy decisions.

The Impact of Red-Light District Closures on Sex Workers and the Community

The closure of red-light districts like Payo Sigadung is often seen as a solution to address the problem of prostitution. However, research shows that such closures are rarely accompanied by sustainable solutions for sex workers. According to Harcourt and Donovan (2005), closing red-light districts without adequate reintegration programs can worsen the conditions of sex workers. They often lose their source of income and are forced to move to more vulnerable locations, such as the streets or illegal red-light districts, where they are more exposed to violence and exploitation.

In Payo Sigadung, the closure in 2014 caused many sex workers to lose their livelihoods and struggle to find alternative employment. A report from Ditjen PP & PA (2014) shows that only a small portion of former sex workers were able to access the skills training programs provided by the government. Most others returned to prostitution discreetly or shifted to informal jobs with low wages. Additionally, the closure of the red-light district also impacted the local economy. Many traders and business owners around Payo Sigadung lost customers and experienced a decline in income (*Jambi Express*, 2014).

A study by Agustina (2013) also highlights the psychological impact of red-light district closures on sex workers. They not only lose their source of income but also face stigmatization and social exclusion. This worsens their mental health and makes reintegration into society more difficult. Therefore, the closure of red-light districts must be accompanied by a more holistic approach, including economic empowerment programs, psychological support, and anti-stigma campaigns.

Prostitution and the closure of red-light districts are complex issues involving various social, economic, and moral aspects. Prostitution cannot be understood solely as a moral issue

but must also be seen as a result of economic inequality and imbalanced power dynamics. Media plays an important role in framing this issue but often gets trapped in moralistic narratives that oversimplify the problem. The closure of red-light districts like Payo Sigadung has significant impacts on sex workers and the surrounding community, yet it is often not accompanied by sustainable solutions. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is needed to address the issue of prostitution, including economic empowerment, human rights protection, and a paradigm shift in media discourse

Research Findings

This study aims to analyze the narratives of morality and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014. Through a literature review and media analysis, this research reveals how issues of morality and prostitution are constructed, as well as the impact of the closure on sex workers and the surrounding community. The findings are divided into three main sections: (1) morality narratives in media coverage, (2) the socio-economic impact of the red-light district closure, and (3) the responses of the community and government to the closure.

Morality Narratives in Media Coverage

Analysis of media coverage reveals that news framing about Payo Sigadung tends to portray sex workers as passive and problematic subjects, without considering their perspectives in this policy. Media often uses terms such as "social disease" and "source of moral decay" to describe the red-light district, further reinforcing the stigma against sex workers.

In this study, an analysis was conducted on 50 news articles from local and national media discussing the closure of Payo Sigadung. The results show that 70% of the news relied on the perspectives of the government and religious groups as the primary sources of information, while only 15% of the articles included the voices of sex workers or human rights activists. Most media outlets tended to use sensationalism in reporting on prostitution. The headlines used were often dramatic and emphasized the controversial aspects of the closure, further reinforcing the negative image of sex workers.

Analysis of media coverage regarding the closure of Payo Sigadung shows that media outlets tended to use conservative morality narratives. Media such as *Kompas* and *Jambi Express* portrayed the closure as a victory of religious values and social norms over moral disorder. For example, *Kompas* (2014) wrote, "The closure of Payo Sigadung is a significant step to cleanse the city of the stain of prostitution and restore the dignity of society." Such framing overlooks the complexity of prostitution and tends to simplify it as merely a moral issue (Entman, 1993).

However, not all media outlets used the same narrative. *The Jakarta Post* (2014) attempted to provide a more humanistic perspective by highlighting the impact of the closure on sex workers. Their article featured the voices of sex workers expressing concerns about their future after losing their source of income. One sex worker interviewed said, "I have no other choice. If the red-light district is closed, I don't know where to work." Nevertheless, such narratives were overshadowed by more sensational moralistic framing.

Media framing analysis also reveals the role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing government policies. Media that dominated the discourse with moralistic narratives tended to encourage repressive policies, such as closing red-light districts without providing sustainable solutions for sex workers (Tapsell, 2017). This demonstrates that media not only reports facts but also actively shapes social reality through the way it frames issues.

Socio-Economic Impact of the Red-Light District Closure

The closure of Payo Sigadung in 2014 had a significant impact on sex workers and the surrounding community. Many sex workers lost their primary source of income and struggled to find alternative employment. According to a report by Ditjen PP & PA (2014), only 20% of former sex workers were able to access the skills training programs provided by the government. Most others returned to prostitution discreetly or shifted to informal jobs with low wages.

Additionally, the closure of the red-light district also impacted the local economy. Many traders and business owners around Payo Sigadung lost customers and experienced a decline in income. A food stall owner revealed, "Before the red-light district was closed, I could earn enough income from the sex workers and visitors. Now, my business is almost bankrupt." This economic impact shows that the closure of the red-light district not only affected sex workers but also the surrounding community, which relied on the economic activities in the area.

According to a *Kompas* report (2015), the closure of red-light districts like Payo Sigadung often merely relocates the problem of prostitution without addressing its root causes. Instead of eliminating prostitution, the closure of red-light districts makes such activities harder to monitor and control. In the case of Payo Sigadung, it was found that some sex workers moved to other locations that were not monitored by the government, while others were forced to work in more precarious conditions, such as servicing clients on the streets without adequate protection. This aligns with findings by Agustina (2013), which show that closing red-light districts without sustainable solutions only worsens the conditions for sex workers and the surrounding community.

The psychological impact of the closure must also not be overlooked. Many sex workers faced stigmatization and social exclusion after the red-light district was closed. They not only lost their source of income but also had to deal with mental stress due to the stigma attached to their profession. Sex workers often experience depression and anxiety after losing their jobs. This worsens their mental health and makes reintegration into society more difficult.

Community and Government Responses to the Closure

Community responses to the closure of Payo Sigadung were divided into two main groups. The first group, dominated by religious leaders and moral activists, supported the closure as a step to cleanse the city of prostitution. They viewed prostitution as a violation of the religious values and social norms upheld in Indonesia. A religious leader in Jambi stated, "The closure of Payo Sigadung is the right step to restore morality in society."

On the other hand, the second group, consisting of human rights activists and some members of the local community, opposed the closure, arguing that it did not address the root of the problem. They contended that closing the red-light district merely relocated the issue of prostitution without providing sustainable solutions for sex workers. A human rights activist said, "Closing the red-light district is not a solution. We need to provide alternative jobs and protection for sex workers."

Regarding the shift of prostitution activities to more concealed forms, the local government recognized this phenomenon and attempted to monitor salons and spas suspected of offering sexual services. However, these efforts were often ineffective due to the difficulty of proving prostitution activities in such establishments. An official from the Jambi Social Services Agency interviewed by *Jambi Independent* (2016) admitted, "We face challenges in monitoring because the activities are conducted secretly and discreetly."

Meanwhile, the local community tended to tolerate the existence of "plus-plus" salons and spas due to their economic benefits for residents. For example, some of these salons and spas became gathering spots for online motorcycle taxi drivers or small vendors seeking customers. However, this tolerance also created a moral dilemma, especially for religious groups and moral activists who oppose prostitution in any form.

The government, on the other hand, adopted an ambiguous approach. On one hand, they closed the red-light district in response to pressure from moral and religious groups. On the other hand, they attempted to provide skills training programs for former sex workers. However, these programs were deemed ineffective due to their limited scope and lack of follow-up support. According to a report by Ditjen PP & PA (2014), only a small portion of former sex workers were able to access these programs, while most returned to prostitution or shifted to informal work.

The findings of this study show that the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014 is a complex issue involving various aspects of morality, economics, and social policy. The media plays a significant role in shaping morality narratives and influencing government policies, yet it often overlooks the socio-economic impacts of the closure on sex workers and the surrounding community. The closure of the red-light district not only caused sex workers to lose their source of income but also triggered significant economic and psychological consequences.

The responses from the community and government reflect the tension between moral values and human rights. While moralists supported the closure as a step to cleanse the city of prostitution, human rights advocates emphasized the importance of providing sustainable solutions for sex workers. The government, meanwhile, adopted an ambiguous approach by closing the red-light district but failing to implement effective reintegration programs.

Additionally, there are reports that the former Payo Sigadung red-light district has returned to public attention due to suspicions that it is still operating, and the public has questioned the government's oversight of the area. Enforcement efforts continue to be carried out by authorities. For example, in July 2024, the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) of Jambi City raided the former Payo Sigadung red-light district and arrested 13 sex workers and one

pimp. The women were then sent back to their hometowns after receiving guidance and support from the Jambi City Social Services Agency. Nevertheless, challenges remain in eradicating prostitution activities in the former red-light district, and monitoring and law enforcement continue to ensure that no illegal activities take place in the area. Therefore, a more holistic approach is needed to address the issue of prostitution, including economic empowerment, human rights protection, and a paradigm shift in media discourse. The closure of red-light districts should not be carried out without sustainable solutions that ensure the well-being of sex workers and the surrounding community

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the narratives of morality and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district. This approach was chosen because it can reveal how media texts shape and reproduce power, ideology, and social relations in the context of the closure of a red-light district (Fairclough, 1995). Additionally, this research also utilizes literature analysis to understand the socio-economic and policy contexts underlying the closure of Payo Sigadung.

Data Sources

The primary data for this study were obtained from print and online media coverage discussing the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014. A total of 50 news articles from local and national media, such as *Kompas*, *Jambi Express*, and *The Jakarta Post*, were analyzed to understand how the media framed the issue of the red-light district's closure. The selection of these media outlets was based on their broad representation, encompassing perspectives from the government, religious groups, and human rights activists. In addition, official documents from the local government, such as reports from Ditjen PP & PA (2014), were used as secondary data sources to complement the analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted in two main stages. First, the researcher searched for news articles through online databases and media archives using keywords such as "Payo Sigadung," "red-light district closure," and "prostitution in Jambi." Second, the researcher collected official documents from the local government and reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) related to the closure of Payo Sigadung. The collected data were then filtered based on their relevance to the research focus, namely morality narratives, media discourse, and the impact of the red-light district's closure.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough (1995). This method allows researchers to examine media texts not only as linguistic products but also as social practices that reflect power relations and ideologies. The analysis was carried out in three stages: (1) text analysis, which includes the selection of words, metaphors, and narrative structures in news coverage; (2) discourse practice analysis,

which examines how texts are produced and consumed by audiences; and (3) social practice analysis, which links discourse to broader social, political, and economic contexts.

Text Analysis

At this stage, the researcher identified how the media framed the closure of Payo Sigadung through the selection of words, metaphors, and narrative structures. For example, media outlets such as *Kompas* and *Jambi Express* tended to use terms like "moral cleansing" and "social disease" to describe the red-light district. Such framing overlooks the complexity of the issue and simplifies prostitution as merely a moral problem (Entman, 1993). On the other hand, media like *The Jakarta Post* attempted to provide a more humanistic perspective by highlighting the impact of the closure on sex workers.

Discourse Practice Analysis

This stage examines how media texts are produced and consumed by audiences. The researcher analyzed the sources of information used by the media, such as statements from the government, religious leaders, and human rights activists. The analysis revealed that 70% of the news relied on the perspectives of the government and religious groups as the primary sources of information, while only 15% of the articles included the voices of sex workers or human rights activists. This indicates a bias in media coverage that tends to marginalize the perspectives of vulnerable groups.

Social Practice Analysis

At this stage, the researcher linked media discourse to broader social, political, and economic contexts. The closure of Payo Sigadung was influenced not only by moral factors but also by socio-economic dynamics and government policies. For instance, many sex workers lost their source of income after the closure of the red-light district and were forced to shift to informal work or underground prostitution (Ditjen PP & PA, 2014). This analysis shows that closing red-light districts without sustainable solutions only worsens the conditions of sex workers and the surrounding community.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, the researcher used source triangulation by comparing data from various media outlets and official documents. Additionally, the researcher cross-checked information obtained from interviews with several informants, such as former sex workers and NGO activists. This was done to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the collected data.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the data used primarily came from print and online media, which may not cover all existing perspectives. Second, limited access to official government documents and NGO reports may affect the depth of the analysis. Nevertheless, the researcher sought to minimize these limitations by using various data sources and triangulation methods.

Analysis

This study reveals the complexity of morality narratives and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014. The findings indicate that the closure of the red-light district was not only influenced by moral factors but also by socio-economic dynamics, the role of the media, and government policies. This discussion will address three main themes emerging from the research findings: (1) the dominance of morality narratives in media discourse, (2) the socio-economic impacts of the red-light district closure, and (3) the contradictory responses from the public and the government.

Dominance of Morality Narratives in Media Discourse

The dynamics of morality-based policies demonstrate that prostitution is often understood within the framework of ethical and religious issues, without considering the underlying socio-economic factors. The narrative used by the local government emphasizes that prostitution is a threat to social and moral stability, necessitating decisive action in the form of closing red-light districts. However, this approach overlooks the reality that many women enter this industry not out of free choice but due to economic constraints and a lack of access to education and decent employment.

One of the key findings of this study is the dominance of morality narratives in media coverage of the Payo Sigadung closure. Media outlets such as *Kompas* and *Jambi Express* tended to frame the closure as a victory of religious values and social norms over moral disorder. Such framing overlooks the complexity of prostitution and simplifies it as merely a moral issue (Entman, 1993). These moralistic narratives not only influence public perception but also encourage repressive government policies, such as closing red-light districts without providing sustainable solutions for sex workers.

Local media play a crucial role in framing this issue. Analysis of news coverage reveals that the media tends to reproduce the perspectives of the government and religious groups, with minimal representation of the voices of the sex workers themselves. Media often use terms that reinforce social stigma against sex workers, such as "social disease" or "source of moral degradation," as reported by Antara.com (2008). In this context, the media functions as an agent that reinforces moral hegemony and narrows the space for discussions on policies more grounded in human rights.

However, this study also found that not all media outlets used the same narrative. *The Jakarta Post* (2014) attempted to provide a more humanistic perspective by highlighting the impact of the closure on sex workers. Nevertheless, such narratives were overshadowed by more sensational moralistic framing. This demonstrates that while the media has the power to shape public opinion, it often becomes trapped in narratives that marginalize the voices of vulnerable groups like sex workers (Tapsell, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to encourage the media to adopt a more balanced approach in framing controversial issues such as prostitution.

Socio-Economic Impacts of the Red-Light District Closure

The closure of Payo Sigadung in 2014 had significant impacts on sex workers and the surrounding community. Many sex workers lost their primary source of income and

struggled to find alternative employment. According to a report by Ditjen PP & PA (2014), only 20% of former sex workers were able to access the skills training programs provided by the government. Most others returned to prostitution discreetly or shifted to informal jobs with low wages. These findings align with previous research showing that the closure of red-light districts is often not followed by sustainable solutions for sex workers (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005).

Additionally, the closure of the red-light district also impacted the local economy. Many traders and business owners around Payo Sigadung lost customers and experienced a decline in income. This indicates that the red-light district was not only a source of income for sex workers but also for the surrounding community, which relied on the economic activities in the area. Therefore, the closure of red-light districts must be carefully considered to minimize the economic impact on the local community.

The psychological impacts of the closure must also not be overlooked. Many sex workers faced stigmatization and social exclusion after the red-light district was closed. They not only lost their source of income but also had to deal with mental stress due to the stigma attached to their profession. A study by Agustina (2013) shows that sex workers often experience depression and anxiety after losing their jobs. This worsens their mental health and makes reintegration into society more difficult. Therefore, the closure of red-light districts must be accompanied by psychological support programs and anti-stigma campaigns to help sex workers adapt to their new lives.

Contradictory Responses from the Public and the Government

Public responses to the closure of Payo Sigadung were divided into two main groups. The first group, dominated by religious leaders and moral activists, supported the closure as a step to cleanse the city of prostitution. They viewed prostitution as a violation of the religious values and social norms upheld in Indonesia. On the other hand, the second group, consisting of human rights activists and some members of the local community, opposed the closure, arguing that it did not address the root of the problem. They contended that closing the red-light district merely relocated the issue of prostitution without providing sustainable solutions for sex workers.

The government, meanwhile, adopted an ambiguous approach. On one hand, they closed the red-light district in response to pressure from moral and religious groups. On the other hand, they attempted to provide skills training programs for former sex workers. However, these programs were deemed ineffective due to their limited scope and lack of follow-up support. According to a report by Ditjen PP & PA (2014), only a small portion of former sex workers were able to access these programs, while most returned to prostitution or shifted to informal work. This highlights the need for the government to develop a more comprehensive approach to addressing prostitution, including economic empowerment, human rights protection, and a paradigm shift in media discourse.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study have important implications for public policy and journalistic practices. First, the government needs to adopt a more holistic approach to

addressing prostitution. The closure of red-light districts should not be carried out without sustainable solutions that ensure the well-being of sex workers and the surrounding community. Skills training programs must be expanded and supported by healthcare, education, and legal protection services for former sex workers.

Second, the media must strive for greater balance in framing controversial issues such as prostitution. The dominance of moralistic narratives tends to marginalize the voices of vulnerable groups like sex workers and influences repressive government policies. Therefore, it is essential to encourage the media to be more inclusive and provide space for diverse perspectives.

Finally, the public must be engaged in more open discussions about prostitution. Stigma and discrimination against sex workers will only exacerbate the problem and hinder their reintegration into society. Anti-stigma campaigns and public education can help shift societal perceptions of prostitution and promote more humane solutions.

The closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014 is a complex issue involving various aspects of morality, economics, and social policy. The media plays a significant role in shaping morality narratives and influencing government policies, yet it often overlooks the socio-economic impacts of the closure on sex workers and the surrounding community. The closure of the red-light district not only caused sex workers to lose their source of income but also triggered significant economic and psychological consequences.

The responses from the public and the government reflect the tension between moral values and human rights. While moralists supported the closure as a step to cleanse the city of prostitution, human rights advocates emphasized the importance of providing sustainable solutions for sex workers. The government, meanwhile, adopted an ambiguous approach by closing the red-light district but failing to implement effective reintegration programs. A more holistic approach is needed to address the issue of prostitution, including economic empowerment, human rights protection, and a paradigm shift in media discourse. The closure of red-light districts should not be carried out without sustainable solutions that ensure the well-being of sex workers and the surrounding community.

Conclusion

The narratives of morality and media discourse surrounding the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district in 2014, as well as its impact on sex workers and the surrounding community, reveal that the closure was influenced not only by moral factors but also by socio-economic dynamics, the role of media, and government policies. Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the closure of Payo Sigadung is a complex issue involving various aspects, including morality, economics, and human rights.

First, this study reveals the dominance of morality narratives in media coverage of the Payo Sigadung closure. Media outlets such as *Kompas* and *Jambi Express* tended to frame the closure as a victory of religious values and social norms over moral disorder. Such framing overlooks the complexity of prostitution and simplifies it as merely a moral issue (Entman,

1993). Although some media outlets like *The Jakarta Post* attempted to provide a more humanistic perspective, moralistic narratives continued to dominate public discourse. This demonstrates that while the media has the power to shape public opinion, it often becomes trapped in narratives that marginalize the voices of vulnerable groups like sex workers.

Second, the closure of Payo Sigadung had a significant impact on sex workers and the surrounding community. Many sex workers lost their primary source of income and struggled to find alternative employment. According to a report by Ditjen PP & PA (2014), only 20% of former sex workers were able to access the skills training programs provided by the government. Most others returned to prostitution discreetly or shifted to informal jobs with low wages. Additionally, the closure of the red-light district also impacted the local economy, as many traders and business owners around Payo Sigadung experienced a decline in income. The psychological impact of the closure must also not be overlooked, as many sex workers faced stigmatization and social exclusion after losing their jobs .

Third, the responses from the community and government to the closure of Payo Sigadung reflect the tension between moral values and human rights. While moralists supported the closure as a step to cleanse the city of prostitution, human rights advocates emphasized the importance of providing sustainable solutions for sex workers. The government, on the other hand, adopted an ambiguous approach by closing the red-light district but failing to implement effective reintegration programs. This highlights the need for a more holistic approach to the closure of red-light districts, including economic empowerment, human rights protection, and a paradigm shift in media discourse.

Based on these findings, this study recommends several steps to address the issue of prostitution more effectively. First, the government needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to handling prostitution, including skills training programs, healthcare services, and legal protection for former sex workers. Second, the media should strive for greater balance in framing controversial issues like prostitution, providing space for diverse perspectives and the voices of marginalized groups. Third, the public should be encouraged to engage in more open discussions about prostitution, reducing stigma and discrimination against sex workers.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the closure of the Payo Sigadung red-light district is a complex issue requiring a multidimensional approach. The dominant morality narratives in media discourse and the repressive policies of the government are insufficient to resolve the problem of prostitution. Therefore, more holistic and sustainable solutions are needed to ensure the well-being of sex workers and the surrounding community.

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