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Low Income, High Hopes: The Impact of Income Among Residents of Karang Indah Village on Perceptions of “Indonesia Emas 2045”

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ABSTRACT

Public perception of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision is a strategic variable that determines the success of the long-term national development agenda. This study aims to examine the effect of income level on the perceptions of residents of Karang Indah Village, Barito Kuala Regency, regarding the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision. The study employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design involving 140 respondents selected via simple random sampling. Perceptions were measured using a Semantic Differential scale consisting of 26 valid items with a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.949. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and ordinal regression with a logit link function via IBM SPSS Statistics. The results indicate that income level does not significantly influence the public’s perception of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision; therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected. The majority of respondents across all income groups held a high perception of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision, indicating a strong internalization of the national narrative at the rural community level regardless of individual economic conditions. These findings challenge the assumptions of rational choice theory and are more consistent with the perspectives of social capital and the imagined community. In practical terms, the strategy for promoting the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision does not need to be differentiated based on economic segmentation, but should instead focus on strengthening institutional trust and social cohesion at the community level.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The most ambitious transitional phase of development in Indonesia's history is currently underway. The government has launched a major agenda to transform Indonesia into a developed, sovereign, just, and prosperous nation in time for the centennial celebration of its independence through the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision (National Development Planning Agency, 2019). This vision is a socio-political construct that requires the internalization and active involvement of all segments of society as subjects and agents of progress not merely as economic objectives. Therefore, the extent to which the public including those in rural areas and at the lower rungs of the economic ladder views these goals as part of their dreams and reality will determine its success, alongside the state's financial capacity. The way society views the national development agenda is a sociopsychological factor that significantly influences how effectively government policies are implemented. Perception itself can be understood as the assumption or meaning an individual assigns to a particular event or object, and is best understood not as a direct reflection of objective conditions, but as the outcome of a cognitive process involving the interpretation of social cues, narratives, and lived experience (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). While negative views can lead to resistance that hinders the achievement of development goals, positive perceptions often foster social support and active engagement (Bhanot & Linos, 2019). This process is shaped by three interactive elements — the perceiver's own attitudes and experiences, the characteristics of the target object, and the surrounding situational context meaning perception can rarely be reduced to a single objective condition such as income alone (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Data from the Central Statistics Agency show that Indonesia's rural population is still dominated by low to middle income groups (Statistics, 2023). This is consistent with multi-country evidence showing that individuals' own sense of income adequacy can predict outcomes as well as, or even better than, objective household income figures alone (Acton et al., 2025). This situation raises a fundamental academic question: Is income level as a proxy for an individual's economic condition that reflects their capacity for future planning and long-term orientation a determining factor in shaping the public's perception of the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision?

Evidence from Italy further shows that individuals' subjective assessment of their own income position often diverges from their objectively measured position within the national and global income distribution, reinforcing that the link between actual income and the perception it shapes is complex and rarely linear (Kulić et al., 2026). The relationship between economic conditions and views on the development agenda has been explained in various ways by a number of academic frameworks. According to rational choice theory, people with higher incomes tend to be more positive toward long-term development goals because they are better able to plan ahead and rationally assess the benefits of policies (Lindholm et al., 2023). On the other hand, System Justification Theory argues that low-income groups often continue to believe in the legitimacy of the system and the possibility of long-term change as a means of achieving social mobility (Jost, 2020). The concept of the "imagined community" adds another dimension by explaining that perceptions of national ideals are not determined solely by material conditions, but also by socially constructed and collectively experienced national narratives and symbols (Anderson, 2016). Meanwhile, social capital theory emphasizes that in communities with high social cohesion, collective perceptions are shaped more by interpersonal trust and group norms than by differences in individual economic conditions (Claridge, 2018).

The differences of opinion regarding these theoretical frameworks reflect the ongoing debate in the literature. Empirical studies on public perception of Golden Indonesia 2045 remain limited and largely urban in focus: Hidayat (2024) cautions that without a solid foundation of national consciousness, the middle class remains vulnerable to destructive polarization, while a descriptive quantitative study of 119 respondents in the city of Medan found that most respondents already understood the vision well, alongside a critical awareness of structural challenges such as low teacher quality and unequal access to education (Zuhri et al., 2025). However, cross-cultural and cross-national studies consistently show that non-economic factors such as institutional trust and collective identity have a greater influence on public perceptions than individual economic circumstances in communities with strong social cohesion, particularly in rural areas of developing countries (van der Meer, 2024). The relationship between income levels and public perceptions of the national development agenda has not yet been fully elucidated, particularly in the context of rural Indonesian communities, which possess distinct sociocultural characteristics and have not been extensively studied empirically as evidenced by the gap between theoretical predictions and conflicting empirical findings. Based on this gap, the objective of this study is to examine the effect of income level on the perceptions of the residents of Karang Indah Village, Barito Kuala Regency, regarding the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision. This study posits the hypothesis that public opinion regarding the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision is significantly influenced by income level (H_1).

2. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the effect of income level on public perceptions of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This approach was chosen because it allows for the systematic and objective measurement of variables at a specific point in time, making it suitable for describing socioeconomic phenomena in the context of rural communities. This study involved 140 respondents who were adult residents of Karang Indah Village, Mandastana Subdistrict, Barito Kuala Regency, South Kalimantan Province. Sampling was conducted using the simple random sampling technique, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected (Sugiyono, 2018). Data were collected through a paper-based survey distributed directly to respondents. This method was chosen given the characteristics of the respondents, who reside in a rural area with limited digital access, where paper-based surveys have been shown to yield higher response rates in similar communities (Pardo, 2022). Before completing the questionnaire, all respondents received an explanation of the study’s objectives and provided voluntary consent to participate as part of the research ethics procedures (Association, 2020). Of the 140 questionnaires distributed, 23 (16.4%) could not be included in the final analysis because respondents did not complete all items in either the perception section or the income level section; thus, the number of valid cases analyzed totaled 117 respondents.

The research instrument consisted of two sections. The first section measured respondents’ income levels, which were grouped into four categories based on the Central Statistics Agency’s (Statistik, 2023) economic classification standards: very high ($> \text{Rp. } 3,500,000$), high ($\text{Rp. } 2,500,000 - 3,500,000$), medium ($\text{Rp. } 1,500,000 - 2,500,000$), and low ($\text{Rp. } < 1,500,000$). The second section measures public perceptions of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision using the Semantic Differential scale developed by Osgood, Suci, and

Tannenbaum(Postelnicu & Călin, 2021). This scale was chosen because it has the advantage of capturing the evaluative and affective dimensions of a person's perceptions more comprehensively than other conventional scales(Heise, 2020). The instrument consists of 28 bipolar items on a seven-point scale between two opposite poles, covering aspects of public perception regarding the long-term national development vision. Before being used in data collection, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability. Validity was tested using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation with a threshold of $r \geq 0.30$ (Field, 2024), and the results showed that 26 of the 28 items were deemed valid. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency, which yielded a value of $\alpha = 0.949$ falling within the "excellent" category thereby establishing the instrument's suitability as a measurement tool in this study(George & Mallery, 2021).

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. The analysis was conducted in several stages: first, descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation were used to describe the distribution of the two variables; second, ordinal regression analysis with a logit link function was applied to test the effect of income level on public perception. The choice of ordinal regression was based on its suitability for the characteristics of the data in this study, given that the dependent variable is ordinal with three categories (high, medium, low). Model evaluation included tests of Model Fitting Information, Pseudo R-Square, Goodness-of-Fit, and Parameter Estimates. The significance level set for all tests was $\alpha = 0.05$.



Figure 1. Relationship between the research variables

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Based on the results of data collection from 140 respondents in Karang Indah Village, an ordinal regression analysis was conducted on 117 valid cases (83.6%), while 23 cases (16.4%) were deemed missing and excluded using the listwise deletion procedure. The missing data were entirely due to incomplete questionnaire responses by the respondents, both in the perception section and the income level section. Given that the missing data ratio of 16.4% exceeded the 15% threshold commonly considered a concern in quantitative data analysis, it should be noted that the listwise deletion procedure was applied under the assumption that the missing data were random (Missing Completely At Random/MCAR). The distribution of respondents based on the two variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	N	(%)
Perceptions of “Golden Indonesia 2045”	High	65	55,6
	Medium	40	34,2
	Low	12	10,3
Income Level	Very High	15	12,8
	High	23	19,7
	Medium	39	33,3
	Low	40	34,2

Source: Article Template JEE, 2026

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents held a high perception of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision (55.6%), followed by those with a moderate perception (34.2%) and a low perception (10.3%). In terms of income level, the largest proportions of respondents fell into the low (34.2%) and moderate (33.3%) categories, reflecting the demographic characteristics of the rural population in South Kalimantan, which is dominated by lower-middle-income groups (Statistik, 2023). These descriptive findings indicate that public optimism regarding the national development vision remains high even though the economic conditions of most respondents are at the low to moderate levels a phenomenon worth further analysis. To explore the distribution patterns of perceptions across each income group, a crosstabulation analysis was conducted, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Crosstabulation

Income Level	High Perception	Moderate Perception	Low Perception	Total
Very High	6 (40%)	7 (46,7%)	2 (13,3%)	15 (100%)
High	12 (52,2%)	10 (43,5%)	1 (4,3%)	23 (100%)
Medium	23 (59,0%)	13 (33,3%)	3 (7,7%)	39 (100%)
Low	24 (60,0%)	10 (25,0%)	6 (15,0%)	40 (100%)
Total	65 (55,6%)	40 (34,2%)	12 (10,3%)	117 (100%)

Source: Article Template JEE, 2026

Table 2 reveals a pattern that empirically contradicts general theoretical assumptions. The low-income group actually has the highest percentage of high perceptions (60.0%), surpassing the very high-income group, which reached only 40.0%. In descending order, the percentages of high perceptions across each group are: Very High (40.0%), High (52.2%), Medium (59.0%), and Low (60.0%), which descriptively indicate a weak inverse linear trend that is, the percentage of high perceptions tends to increase as income groups decrease. Nevertheless, this descriptive pattern was not statistically confirmed by the ordinal regression analysis conducted; therefore, it cannot be interpreted as evidence of a significant relationship between income level and public perception. This pattern merely illustrates the frequency distribution within the research sample and does not constitute an inferential finding. This phenomenon can be explained through the lens of System Justification Theory, in which low-income groups actually place greater hope in the promise of long-term economic transformation as a means of social mobility (Jost, 2020).

Table 3. Model Fitting Information.

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	30,630			
Final	29,042	1,588	3	0,662

Source: Article Template JEE, 2026

Table 3 shows that adding the income level variable to the model does not result in a significant improvement compared to the model without predictors (Intercept Only), with a Chi-Square value of 1.588 and $p = 0.662$ ($p > 0.05$). The Degrees of Freedom (df) value of 3 in this test reflects the number of categories of the predictor variable minus one (4 income categories – 1 = 3 df). These results indicate that, overall, the ordinal regression model with income level as a predictor is not significant in explaining the variation in public perception (Field, 2024). The consistency of $df = 3$ can also be seen in Table 6 (Test of Parallel Lines) and Table 7 (Parameter Estimates), which use the same predictor variable structure.

The Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.016 indicates that income level accounts for only about 1.6% of the variation in public perception of “Indonesia Emas 2045,” while the remaining 98.4% is explained by other factors outside the model. The McFadden value of 0.007 which falls well below the 0.20–0.40 range that indicates a model with an excellent fit according to McFadden’s criteria further confirms that income is not an adequate predictor of perceptions in the context of this study (Long & Freese, 2014). The goodness-of-fit test showed significance values for Pearson ($p = 0.288$) and Deviance ($p = 0.282$), both of which were greater than 0.05. These results indicate no significant difference between the values predicted by the model and the observed data, so the model is deemed to fit the data (Field, 2024). Nevertheless, a model that is technically fit but not statistically significant confirms that income level does not have a statistically meaningful explanatory power regarding public perceptions.

The proportional odds assumption, which is a prerequisite for ordinal regression, was tested using the Test of Parallel Lines. The results show a Chi-Square value of 3.818 with $p = 0.282$ ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the assumption that the regression coefficients are constant across all response categories is satisfied (Agresti, 2019). Thus, the use of the Proportional Odds model in this study is methodologically justified. In the parameter estimates, all location coefficients showed significance levels well above $\alpha = 0.05$: the Very High group ($\beta = 0.620$; Wald = 1.151; $p = 0.283$), the High group ($\beta = 0.092$; Wald = 0.032; $p = 0.858$), and Moderate ($\beta = -0.085$; Wald = 0.036; $p = 0.849$). The 95% confidence intervals for all three coefficients also include zero, confirming that none of the income categories is statistically significantly different from the reference category (Low) in terms of influencing perceptions of Indonesia Emas 2045. Thus, the research hypothesis stating that income level influences public perceptions is rejected.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study consistently show that income level does not have a significant effect on the perceptions of the residents of Karang Indah Village regarding the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision ($\chi^2 = 1.588$; $p = 0.662$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.016$). This result contradicts the theoretical assumption based on Rational Choice Theory, which states that people with better economic conditions tend to be more supportive of and optimistic about long-

term development agendas because of their ability to make plans for the future (Lindholm et al., 2023). However, these results are consistent with other recent empirical studies that have found that views on national goals and policies are strongly influenced by non-economic variables in the context of rural populations in developing countries. Regardless of economic category, the majority of respondents (55.6%) hold a positive view of the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision, a point that must be understood before discussing the interactions among these factors. This is not merely a statistic but a reflection of a social psychological phenomenon: the persistence of “National Hope” and collective belief in the future. This phenomenon indicates that in rural communities, optimism regarding the nation’s long-term agenda is not driven by day-to-day economic calculations but is maintained as a shared cognitive mechanism to sustain positive projections of future social mobility (Jost, 2020; Lindholm et al., 2023).

In the Indonesian context, the “Indonesia Emas 2045” vision championed by the government as a development agenda marking the centennial of independence has shaped a collective narrative that has permeated various segments of society through diverse communication channels, ranging from village government programs and the mass media to educational institutions (National Development Planning Agency, 2019). This phenomenon is relevant to Anderson’s concept of the “Imagined Community,” in which national identity and a shared vision of the future are constructed not solely on the basis of experienced material conditions, but rather on the basis of socially constructed narratives and national symbols (Anderson, 2016). The community of Karang Indah Village, although economically dominated by low- and middle-income groups, appears to have internalized the grand narrative of “Golden Indonesia 2045” as part of their national identity a condition that fosters the formation of positive perceptions not linearly tied to individual economic circumstances.

The finding that income levels do not have a significant direct impact on public perception challenges the assumptions of economic determinism and rational choice theory, which have long been among the dominant frameworks in public policy studies. The rational choice approach, popularized in political science by Downs (1957), assumes that individuals form their preferences and perceptions based on economic cost-benefit calculations. In other words, those who are financially better off are projected to be more supportive of development agendas because they have more material interests at stake and greater capacity to plan for the future (Downs, 1957). However, an increasing number of contemporary studies question the relevance of economic determinism in explaining public perceptions, particularly in developing countries with complex social structures. Norris & Inglehart (2019), in a comparative study across 57 countries, found that cultural factors, post-materialistic values, and institutional trust consistently have greater explanatory power than individual economic conditions in shaping attitudes and perceptions toward public policy (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

In the specific context of this study, the lack of significance of income as a predictor of perceptions can be understood through several complementary explanatory frameworks. First, these findings confirm the argument that the relationship between objective economic conditions and the public’s subjective perceptions of public policy is not linear and cannot be assumed to be mechanistic. A study by Jiang et al. (2023), which examined differences in trust in the government across income groups, found that when income was measured based on objective criteria, differences in trust in the government among these income groups were, on the whole, not significant a pattern that is highly consistent with the findings of this study. According to Jiang et al. (2023), perceptions are based on how people subjectively assess their economic status in relation to their group, rather than on their actual economic situation (Jiang

et al., 2023). The absence of a perception gap among income groups in rural communities such as Karang Indah Village which is typically dominated by the lower-middle class makes sense because everyone in that community operates within a relatively homogeneous economic framework, so income differences among them are not sufficient to produce statistically significant differences in perception.

Second, the high level of positive perception, which is consistent across all income groups with 55.6% of respondents falling into the “high perception” category regardless of their income group reflects the strong internalization of a collectively constructed national narrative. This phenomenon aligns with Anderson’s concept of the “Imagined Community,” which clarifies that the stories, symbols, and representations of nationhood collectively created and experienced through various communication channels serve as the foundation of national identity and a shared vision for the country’s future, rather than merely the material conditions people experience (Anderson, 2016). In the Indonesian context, the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision, widely disseminated by the government, has created a collective narrative that permeates all strata of society regardless of individual economic status through village programs, mass media, educational institutions, and community gatherings (National Development Planning Agency, 2019). By downplaying differences of opinion among economic groups, this strong national narrative functions as a “balancing” variable and reduces the predictive value of income. In a comparative study covering dozens of countries, Norris & Inglehart (2019) also found that, particularly in developing countries with strong community ties, cultural factors and collective values consistently have greater explanatory power than individual economic conditions in shaping public attitudes and perceptions toward national agendas (Norris & Inglehart, 2021).

Third, the descriptive pattern showing that the low-income group has the highest percentage of positive perceptions (60.0%) exceeding that of the very high-income group, which stands at only 40.0% provides an interesting indication, although it is not inferentially confirmed. This pattern can be tentatively understood through the lens of System Justification Theory, which posits that people in economically vulnerable positions have a psychological need to maintain faith in the system’s legitimacy and its promise of long-term transformation as a cognitive defense mechanism (coping mechanism) to sustain hopes for social mobility. It seems reasonable that the “Golden Indonesia 2045” vision which aims to reduce poverty, promote equitable development, improve the quality of public services, and create jobs would resonate deeply with those who need a secure and optimistic vision of the future to alleviate anxiety about their current material circumstances. This perspective reinforces the argument that low-income groups often exhibit greater psychological optimism toward national development programs compared to upper-middle-class groups, who are typically more critical and skeptical of the promises made by the government (Jost, 2020). From this perspective, the positive views held by low-income groups toward “Indonesia Emas 2045” are not an anomaly, but rather a logical manifestation of a shared cognitive need to maintain hope in long-term national development initiatives that are expected to improve their socioeconomic circumstances in the future.

Fourth, the findings of this study also have important methodological implications. The very low Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.016 clearly indicates that 98.4% of the variation in public perceptions of “Golden Indonesia 2045” is determined by other factors not included in this study’s model. This suggests that income is merely one of many variables shaping perceptions and likely not the most dominant one. Contemporary studies indicate that variables such as

institutional trust, educational attainment, intensity of information exposure, and community social capital have far greater explanatory power regarding public perceptions than economic conditions alone (Jiang et al., 2023). Fan et al. (2022), in their study on trust in government and social cohesion, found that the government's communication behavior and image management positively influence public trust in the government and social cohesion, which in turn shape public perceptions of the government's agendas. These findings suggest that in the context of future research, a model that integrates the variables of institutional trust, social capital, and access to information as joint predictors rather than income alone will be able to explain variations in public perceptions of the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision more comprehensively and accurately (Fan et al., 2022).

3. CONCLUSION

This study found that income level does not have a significant effect on the perceptions of residents of Karang Indah Village, Barito Kuala Regency, regarding the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study is rejected. This finding directly challenges the assumptions of Rational Choice Theory, which has long predicted that an individual's economic conditions are the primary determinants in shaping perceptions of long-term national development agendas. Conversely, the results of this study are more consistent with the perspectives of Relative Deprivation, social capital, and the Imagined Community, which emphasize that public perceptions of national aspirations are shaped by far more complex sociocultural mechanisms and cannot be reduced solely to individual economic conditions. The fact that the majority of respondents across all income groups hold a high level of perception regarding the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision reflects the strong internalization of the national narrative at the rural community level, regardless of the economic disparities among them. These findings have important practical implications for policymakers. Communication and outreach strategies for the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision do not need to be differentiated based on economic segmentation of the population, as optimism regarding the national development agenda has proven to transcend income groups.

The government and policymakers should focus more on strengthening institutional trust, social cohesion, and equitable access to information as more effective tools for building and maintaining the public's positive perception of the long-term development agenda, particularly in rural communities. This study has a number of limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting the findings and designing follow-up research. This study was conducted in only one village with a relatively homogeneous community, so generalizing the findings to other rural communities should be done with caution. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design used in this study only allows for the identification of statistical relationships between variables at a single point in time; therefore, the term "influence" in this study refers to the results of regression coefficient tests and is not intended to imply a causal relationship in the strict sense. Similarly, the 16.4% proportion of missing data which exceeds the general threshold of 15% calls for additional caution in interpreting these findings, given that the Missing Completely At Random (MCAR) assumption used has not been formally tested. Future research is recommended to expand the geographic scope, adopt a longitudinal design, and incorporate non-economic variables such as institutional trust, educational attainment, and intensity of information exposure as additional predictors to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the factors shaping public perceptions of the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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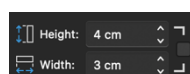
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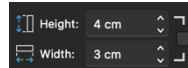


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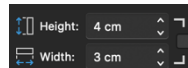
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