Policy Implementation of Direct Cash Assistance Based on DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 in Langowan Timur District

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policy based on the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) and the Desil 1 of the Extreme Poverty Eradication Acceleration Program (P3KE) in Langowan Timur District, Minahasa Regency. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research explores four key variables from the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) policy implementation model: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication and coordination, and disposition of implementers. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving stakeholders, including village officials, community leaders, and aid recipients. Findings reveal that although the program generally aligns with its regulatory framework, several challenges persist, particularly in data accuracy, coordination among institutions, and infrastructure limitations. The study offers recommendations for improving the quality of data, enhancing community participation, and strengthening institutional capacity to ensure more equitable and effective policy implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most pressing challenges faced by the Indonesian government. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, the poverty rate in Indonesia stood at 9.36% of the total population, which equates to approximately 25.9 million people. Poverty affects not only the economic purchasing power of individuals but also their access to education, healthcare, and overall quality of life. To address this issue, the government has launched various strategic policies, one of which is the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program. This program serves as a social intervention aiming to provide financial support to low-income households so they can meet basic needs and mitigate the effects of economic disparity.

In Langowan Timur District, Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi, poverty remains a critical issue. According to BPS Minahasa (2023), the poverty rate in this region is approximately 7.18%, with around 24,320 people classified as poor. Most residents are employed in the agriculture sector, cultivating crops such as corn and cloves. However, they face challenges in accessing markets, agricultural technology, and infrastructure, which limit income and increase dependency on social assistance programs.

To ensure that assistance reaches the right recipients, the government utilizes the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) and the Extreme Poverty Eradication Acceleration Program (P3KE) Desil 1. These data systems serve as references in determining beneficiaries of the BLT program. Despite their intended purpose, these systems face criticism regarding accuracy and relevance, particularly within local contexts. Common issues include exclusion errors, where eligible recipients are not listed, and inclusion errors, where ineligible individuals receive aid. These inaccuracies can lead to public distrust in the government's capacity to deliver fair and effective assistance.

Moreover, implementation issues such as limited digital infrastructure and coordination among institutions further hinder the success of the BLT program. Effective communication between national, regional, and local governments is often lacking, resulting in data duplication, delays, and overlooked eligible recipients. Additionally, disparities in understanding and prioritization among stakeholders, such as local governments, community leaders, and residents, can create conflicts and reduce the effectiveness of the aid distribution process.

Given these challenges, this study seeks to analyze how the BLT policy is implemented in Langowan Timur District, with particular attention to the use of DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 data. This research aims to evaluate whether the aid is being distributed effectively, identify factors that support or hinder implementation, and offer strategic recommendations for improving policy delivery mechanisms.

This topic is particularly relevant as it not only addresses the technical and structural barriers to social aid distribution but also emphasizes the importance of data integrity, institutional coordination, and community involvement in public policy. Through qualitative analysis involving key stakeholders such as village heads, local leaders, and beneficiaries, the study provides insights into real-world conditions and contributes to the broader discourse on poverty alleviation in Indonesia. The findings

aim to support the development of more responsive, inclusive, and evidence-based social policies in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on public policy implementation offers various models and theories that are essential for understanding how policies are translated from design into practice. In the context of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) in Indonesia, particularly when guided by datasets like DTKS and P3KE Desil 1, it is crucial to explore these theoretical frameworks to evaluate policy performance and implementation barriers.

Public policy can be broadly defined as a set of actions undertaken by the government to address public issues. According to Easton (1965), public policy is the authoritative allocation of values for a society, while Anderson (2003) defines it as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. In the context of BLT, policy decisions are shaped by social equity concerns, economic conditions, and institutional capacity.

One of the most influential models in policy implementation is the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) model, which outlines six key variables affecting implementation success: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication and enforcement, the characteristics of implementing agencies, the disposition of implementers, and the political, economic, and social conditions. These variables provide a comprehensive analytical lens through which one can examine the challenges and enabling factors in the implementation of BLT programs.

In addition to Van Meter and Van Horn, Grindle (1980) emphasizes the role of content and context in policy implementation. According to Grindle, the success of implementation depends on the extent to which the content of the policy is clearly defined and whether the contextual environment supports the operationalization of that content. In the case of BLT, content includes the selection criteria based on DTKS and P3KE Desil 1, while the context includes institutional coordination, administrative capacity, and public trust.

Another important theoretical contribution comes from Edward III (1980), who argues that effective policy implementation is contingent upon four factors: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Communication ensures that the policy goals and methods are transmitted across implementing agencies. Resources include financial, human, and technical assets necessary to enforce the policy. Disposition refers to the commitment and understanding of the implementers, while bureaucratic structure involves the level of hierarchy and rules governing operations. Applying this model to the BLT program reveals the multifaceted nature of implementation, where clarity of policy design must be matched with adequate capacity and organizational readiness.

The importance of reliable data in policy implementation is also emphasized in contemporary studies. The use of DTKS and P3KE as targeting mechanisms is grounded in the need for data-driven

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decision-making. DTKS, managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, contains information about poor and vulnerable households, while P3KE Desil 1 identifies the poorest 10% of households. Scholars like Nugroho (2011) argue that accurate and timely data are essential not only for program effectiveness but also for building public accountability.

Empirical studies have assessed the implementation of BLT and similar programs across various regions in Indonesia. For example, Puspitasari and Aminullah (2024) examined BLT implementation in Pasuruan, noting that although policy goals were clear, limitations in human resources and time management affected program delivery. Similarly, Winataa et al. (2023) observed in Banyuasin that while the implementation structure was functional, issues such as social jealousy and logistical delays posed significant challenges. Sasuwuk et al. (2021) highlighted maladministration and limited monitoring in Minahasa as key barriers to effective policy realization. These findings suggest that policy success is contingent upon contextual adaptations and not merely a matter of policy design.

This study builds upon these theoretical and empirical foundations by applying the Van Meter and Van Horn model to evaluate the implementation of the BLT policy in Langowan Timur. The incorporation of DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 as criteria for beneficiary identification introduces a new layer of complexity in policy enforcement. The literature underscores the need for robust coordination among institutions, transparent communication strategies, and strong institutional capacity to ensure that the policy reaches the intended targets and achieves its social objectives.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive methodology aimed at exploring the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policy based on DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 data in Langowan Timur District. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow for in-depth investigation of the context, perceptions, and challenges experienced by both policy implementers and beneficiaries. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research is particularly suited to investigating phenomena in their natural setting, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation.

The focus of this research was to analyze four core indicators: (1) policy standards and objectives, (2) resources, (3) communication and coordination, and (4) disposition or the attitude of implementers. These indicators were adapted from the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) model and served as the foundation for data collection and thematic analysis.

The study was conducted in Karondoran Village, located in Langowan Timur District of Minahasa Regency. This location was selected based on its representative demographic and economic characteristics, particularly its dependence on agriculture and relatively high poverty rate. The site was also chosen due to the implementation of the BLT program following DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 data in the area.

Data sources included primary and secondary materials. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 informants selected using purposive sampling. These informants consisted of key stakeholders, including the village head, members of the village consultative board (BPD), local community leaders, program staff, and both recipients and non-recipients of BLT. Secondary data were obtained from relevant government regulations, village documents, and statistical reports from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS).

Data collection techniques involved semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were guided by open-ended questions that encouraged informants to share their experiences and insights. Observations were carried out to verify interview responses and capture real-time dynamics of BLT distribution. Documents such as village planning records and lists of aid recipients were also reviewed to triangulate findings.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (2017) model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Triangulation was applied to ensure data validity by cross-checking information obtained from interviews, documents, and field observations. Ethical considerations were upheld by securing informed consent from all participants and ensuring confidentiality throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings and discusses them in the context of policy implementation theory, particularly the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) model. The analysis is organized around four main themes: policy standards and objectives, resource availability, communication and coordination, and implementers' disposition. Each theme is explored based on interview data, field observations, and supporting documentation.

Policy Standards and Objectives

In Karondoran Village, the implementation of the BLT policy was generally in line with the national regulatory framework. Interviews with village officials revealed that the objectives of the policy to reduce poverty and support extremely poor households were well understood. However, the specific standards guiding who should receive the assistance were not always clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Some village staff noted that the criteria based on DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 were "too rigid" and did not reflect recent socioeconomic changes at the village level. This mismatch led to some eligible households being excluded, while others who were better off remained listed as recipients due to outdated data.

Resource Availability

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Resource constraints were a major challenge in implementing the BLT policy. Village administrators pointed out that the available budget from the village fund (Dana Desa) was limited, and allocations for operational costs were insufficient for conducting proper verification and monitoring. In terms of human resources, there were only a few staff members trained in managing social programs and data systems like DTKS. This resulted in delays and inconsistencies during the data validation process. Furthermore, digital infrastructure remained underdeveloped, limiting the ability of officials to update and access real-time data on potential beneficiaries.

Communication and Coordination

Effective communication and inter-agency coordination are critical for policy success. However, the study found that coordination between village governments and higher administrative levels (district and provincial) was weak. There was limited technical guidance from the Ministry of Social Affairs and regional agencies on how to align local beneficiary lists with DTKS and P3KE databases. This created confusion at the village level, especially when attempting to justify changes to the recipient list. Furthermore, community outreach and public information campaigns were limited, leading to public skepticism about the fairness of aid distribution. Beneficiaries expressed frustration over the lack of transparency, with some suggesting that favoritism influenced who received assistance.

Disposition of Implementers

The attitudes and commitment of implementers significantly influenced the success of the BLT policy. In Karondoran, village heads and administrative staff generally demonstrated high commitment to the program's goals. However, due to a lack of continuous training and updated policy guidance, some staff members were unsure how to handle discrepancies in the data. This uncertainty sometimes resulted in arbitrary decisions or reliance on informal networks for decision-making, which undermined the integrity of the process. Additionally, interviews with local leaders revealed that while they supported the BLT initiative, they were often excluded from the planning and evaluation stages, which reduced their ability to advocate for community needs.

Perceived Impact of the BLT Policy

From the beneficiaries' perspective, the BLT program helped alleviate short-term financial burdens, especially for households with limited income sources. Respondents reported using the funds primarily for food, medicine, school supplies, and utility payments. Nevertheless, many also indicated that the amount received was insufficient for addressing long-term needs or capital investment. Moreover, several non-recipient households, who were equally poor or more so, expressed disappointment and confusion over their exclusion. This gap in perceived fairness has social implications, such as tension between neighbors and erosion of trust in local governance.

Alignment with Implementation Theory

The findings align with Van Meter and Van Horn's model in demonstrating that successful implementation requires coherence across policy design, resource allocation, institutional coordination, and implementers' behavior. The case of Karondoran Village highlights how even well-intentioned programs can fall short if local realities are not adequately addressed. For instance, while the policy goals were consistent with national priorities, the lack of flexible criteria and dynamic data management systems undermined execution. Moreover, without adequate support and oversight, village staff faced structural limitations that hampered their effectiveness.

Opportunities for Improvement

Several opportunities exist to improve BLT policy implementation in Karondoran and similar contexts. First, there is a need to enhance the integration between DTKS and local data sources through participatory data verification involving community leaders. Second, digital literacy and technical capacity among village staff must be improved through targeted training. Third, regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be instituted to evaluate program performance and identify areas for adjustment. Lastly, fostering inclusive decision-making by involving civil society and beneficiary communities can improve program ownership and transparency.

In conclusion, while the BLT program based on DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 has made progress in reaching vulnerable populations, its implementation in Langowan Timur faces significant challenges. Addressing these issues requires both structural reforms in governance and operational improvements in field-level execution. The findings suggest that a bottom-up approach, coupled with top-down policy alignment, is essential for realizing the full potential of social assistance programs aimed at poverty alleviation in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policy in Karondoran Village, Langowan Timur District, focusing on the application of DTKS and P3KE Desil 1 as key instruments for targeting beneficiaries. The analysis was guided by the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) policy implementation model, which provided a robust framework for evaluating the interplay between policy objectives, resources, communication, implementers' disposition, and environmental factors. The findings indicate that although the BLT policy aligns with national poverty alleviation goals, its implementation at the village level encounters several structural and operational challenges. These include outdated and rigid targeting criteria, limited human and financial resources, insufficient digital infrastructure, weak coordination among administrative levels, and inconsistent communication with the public. Furthermore, the absence of a participatory approach in decision-making has led to perceptions of unfairness and reduced trust in the system. Nonetheless, the policy has demonstrated tangible benefits for recipient households by easing short-term financial pressures and supporting basic

needs. The existence of the BLT program also reflects a commendable commitment by the government to use data-driven strategies in addressing extreme poverty. The key challenge lies in translating these commitments into effective, localized action that resonates with on-the-ground realities.

To enhance the effectiveness of the BLT policy and ensure its sustainability, several recommendations are proposed:

1. Data System Integration and Validation: Strengthen collaboration between central agencies and local governments to continuously update DTKS and P3KE data. Implement a participatory validation mechanism involving local leaders, community groups, and beneficiaries to ensure accuracy and fairness.
2. Capacity Building: Invest in regular training for village staff and program implementers, focusing on data management, digital tools, and ethical standards. Empowering local implementers is essential for improving program quality and responsiveness.
3. Institutional Coordination: Establish a multi-level coordination framework involving national, provincial, and village authorities to streamline guidance, oversight, and support. Develop a shared digital platform for real-time data exchange and policy feedback.
4. Transparent Communication: Enhance public communication strategies by using various media channels to disseminate policy goals, eligibility criteria, and grievance mechanisms. Transparency fosters community engagement and minimizes misinformation.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation: Conduct regular program evaluations to assess impact, identify bottlenecks, and guide improvements. Involve third-party institutions or academia to provide objective assessments and reinforce public accountability.

In conclusion, the success of poverty reduction policies such as BLT hinges not only on sound policy design but also on implementation strategies that recognize and adapt to local contexts. Strengthening the institutional framework, improving data governance, and fostering community participation are critical steps toward creating a more inclusive and effective social protection system in Indonesia.

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