

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN UPDATING THE INTEGRATED SOCIAL WELFARE DATA FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILY HOPE PROGRAM IN PESANGGRAHAN VILLAGE, CILACAP REGENCY

Oktinus Nafsilfi¹, Raden Imam Al Hafis²

¹ Department of Public Administration, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

² Department of Public Administration, Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: 045092273@ecampus.ut.ac.id

ABSTRACT

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The success of the Family Hope Program (PKH) is highly dependent on the accuracy of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS). However, DTKS updates at the village level still face obstacles that cause the target recipients of assistance to often be missed. This study aims to examine the transparency and accountability of DTKS updates and PKH distribution in Pesanggrahan Village (Kesugihan Subdistrict, Cilacap Regency). Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document reviews involving 15 informants selected purposively. Findings indicate that transparency remains weak: public access to information is limited, complaint mechanisms are not functioning effectively, and community participation in village deliberations is minimal. Regarding accountability, discrepancies were found between DTKS data and on-the-ground realities, leading to inclusion errors (7.9%) and exclusion errors (7.9%). Key challenges include limited human resources, inadequate information technology infrastructure, and insufficient outreach. This study contributes to the literature by simultaneously examining transparency and accountability mechanisms at the village level, a perspective still underrepresented in prior research. Previous studies have largely focused on macro-level evaluations of PKH implementation, while limited attention has been paid to village-level governance mechanisms in updating welfare databases. Recommendations include strengthening community-based information systems, enhancing the capacity of village officials, and optimizing village deliberations as a platform for participatory social verification. The findings demonstrate that procedural accountability does not necessarily guarantee substantive targeting accuracy in decentralized welfare governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a structural issue that has yet to be fully resolved by any country, including Indonesia (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Over the past few decades, despite numerous poverty alleviation programs, the greatest challenge remains ensuring that social assistance truly reaches the most deserving individuals or groups. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2024), approximately 9.03 percent of Indonesia's population remained below the poverty line, highlighting the continuing importance of accurate social assistance targeting. Amid these complex conditions, the Indonesian government established the Family Hope Program (PKH) as the frontline of a data-driven social protection system. The expectation is that targeting accuracy can be achieved through a single integrated database, namely the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS).

According to Nasripani (2025), the PKH is designed to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by targeting families classified as extremely poor. It was developed as a form of conditional cash assistance specifically directed at the most vulnerable segments of the population. Thus, the

accuracy of the data collection system is a crucial factor to ensure that assistance delivery aligns with the original objectives.

The DTKS is not merely a list of beneficiary names; it is an information system designed to comprehensively record the socioeconomic conditions of households, including poverty levels, disabilities, vulnerability levels, and other specific needs. Based on Ministry of Social Affairs Regulation No. 3 of 2021, updating the DTKS is a regulatory mandate requiring local governments, including villages, to routinely verify and validate the data (Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). According to a report by the Corruption Eradication Commission (2021), two routine social assistance programs PKH and Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) targeted nearly 20 million Beneficiary Families (KPM) in 2021, equivalent to approximately 67 percent of total families recorded in the DTKS, with a budget allocation reaching Rp72 trillion. Thus, data accuracy is not merely a technical requirement but an absolute necessity.

In many rural areas, the DTKS update process often proceeds without adequate transparency mechanisms. The public is not provided with information regarding the criteria

used to determine who is eligible for assistance, nor are there official announcements explaining who has been proposed for inclusion or removal. Meanwhile, complaint channels often do not function as intended. Such conditions ultimately give rise to a paradoxical situation: social protection programs, which are supposed to strengthen public trust, often instead generate suspicion, social jealousy, and even conflicts at the grassroots level (Purwanto et al., 2021).

One relevant location for examining these dynamics is Pesanggrahan Village, Kesugihan Subdistrict, Cilacap Regency, Central Java Province. As the lowest level of government and the frontline in directly interacting with beneficiary communities, this village offers a crucial perspective. Based on preliminary data from the Next Generation Social Welfare Information System (SIKS-NG) as of January 2026, a significant disparity was found between the number of families listed in the DTKS and the estimated number of poor households from an independent survey.

From an academic perspective, research discussing the accountability and transparency of social programs at the village level remains scarce, particularly studies specifically examining the relationship between data quality and the effectiveness of aid distribution. Previous studies have mostly examined PKH implementation from a macro-policy perspective (Cahyono & Hakim, 2021), but few have specifically analyzed data updating mechanisms at the village level using an approach that combines accountability and transparency dimensions simultaneously. Furthermore, existing studies rarely explore how local political dynamics, kinship relations, and administrative capacity influence the accuracy of DTKS updating at the village level. This gap is particularly pronounced in the context of Central Java villages. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its simultaneous examination of transparency and accountability mechanisms within the DTKS updating process at the village level, integrating empirical evidence of inclusion and exclusion errors with an analysis of structural and cultural barriers, an approach largely absent in prior literature. From a governance perspective, transparency and accountability are fundamental principles in ensuring that social protection programs operate fairly and effectively. Transparency enables citizens to access information regarding beneficiary selection and complaint mechanisms, while accountability ensures that public institutions remain answerable for the accuracy and fairness of welfare distribution.

This study has three main objectives: (1) to examine the extent to which the DTKS updating process in Pesanggrahan Village reflects the principles of information transparency; (2) to assess the level of accountability in PKH distribution based on the alignment between the data used and actual conditions on the ground; and (3) to identify structural and cultural factors that hinder transparency and accountability in DTKS management at the village level.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. The primary reason for choosing a qualitative approach is that the phenomena under examination namely, transparency and accountability in social data management require a deep understanding of processes, situations, and underlying meanings, which

cannot be adequately explained through statistical figures alone.

2.2. Research Location and Time

The study was conducted in Pesanggrahan Village, Kesugihan Subdistrict, Cilacap Regency, Central Java Province, from March to May 2026. This location was selected because a significant disparity was found between the official DTKS data and the estimated number of poor families based on an independent survey.

2.3. Data Sources

Data sources were divided into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and direct field observations. Secondary data were obtained from village administrative documents, SIKS-NG reports, and regulations related to DTKS management.

2.4. Informant Selection

Informant selection was conducted using purposive sampling, with the primary criteria being individuals directly involved in the DTKS updating process or PKH distribution. A total of 20 informants were involved, divided into four groups: (1) village officials (village head, village secretary, and three SIKS-NG operators); (2) two sub-district PKH facilitators; (3) eight active PKH beneficiaries selected randomly; and (4) five residents not registered in the DTKS but who, according to initial assessment, met the eligibility criteria.

2.5. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques included: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting 15–45 minutes, recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim; (2) direct observation of village deliberations and daily administrative services at the village office; and (3) document review of DTKS summary data, PKH distribution reports, meeting minutes, and relevant regulations.

2.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), comprising four stages: (1) data collection, (2) data condensation, (3) data presentation, and (4) conclusion drawing and verification. During the condensation stage, raw data from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were sorted, coded, and grouped into themes relevant to the research questions.

To address methodological clarity (as requested by Reviewers), the coding and thematic analysis process is explained as follows: First, *open coding* was performed by reading all transcripts and field notes line-by-line to identify initial concepts (e.g., "lack of information," "never invited to deliberation," "complaint not followed up"). Second, *axial coding* grouped these codes into broader categories: transparency (sub-categories: access to information, functioning of complaint channels, participation in deliberations) and accountability (sub-categories: data accuracy, reporting mechanisms, public oversight). Third, *selective coding* integrated these categories into core themes corresponding to the research objectives. Two researchers independently coded the first three transcripts to ensure inter-coder reliability, and disagreements were resolved through discussion. Thematic saturation was achieved after the twelfth informant, as no new codes

emerged. Additional interviews were conducted to confirm the consistency of emerging themes and ensure data adequacy.

2.7. Data Validity

To ensure credibility, two types of triangulation were employed. First, *source triangulation* compared information from village officials, PKH facilitators, beneficiaries, and non-beneficiary residents. Second, *methodological triangulation* cross-checked findings from interviews, observations, and document reviews. Additionally, *member checking* was conducted with three key informants (one village official, one PKH facilitator, and one beneficiary) to verify the accuracy of interpretations.

2.8. Ethical Consideration

All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Informants' identities were anonymized using initials to protect confidentiality and privacy. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any stage of the interview process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Data Discrepancies and Targeting Errors

A comparison between DTKS records and field findings revealed significant discrepancies in beneficiary targeting, including both inclusion and exclusion errors, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. DTKS Data Discrepancies in Pesanggrahan Village

| Category | Number of HH | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Total Households | 987 | 100% |
| Registered in DTKS | 312 | 31.6% |
| Active PKH Recipients | 187 | 59.9% of DTKS |
| Inclusion Error | 34 | 3.4% |
| Exclusion Error | 78 | 7.9% |

Source: Compiled by the researcher, 2026.

The data indicate that exclusion errors were more dominant than inclusion errors, suggesting that many eligible poor households remained outside the welfare database. This finding reflects weaknesses in village-level verification and updating mechanisms.

A self-administered survey using multidimensional poverty indicators from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) confirmed that at least 78 families not listed in the DTKS actually met poverty criteria, while approximately 34 families listed no longer met eligibility.

Direct quotation (exclusion error case):

“My name has never been on the recipient list, even though I have four school-aged children and work as a farm laborer with irregular income, sometimes less than Rp50,000 per day. I don't know how to register or complain.” (Mr. T, 45-year-old farm laborer, interview, April 12, 2026)

This finding aligns with Wijayanti et al. (2025) in Semarang, who revealed that the main problem in DTKS-based social assistance distribution is data inaccuracy, exacerbated by infrequent updates and low public awareness.

3.2. Transparency

According to Majid and Zaerudin (2023), transparency is defined as an open attitude in governance that provides space for the public to know policies, decision-making processes, and outcomes of public institutions.

First finding: Limited public access to information. Of the thirteen non-government residents interviewed, only two could explain what the DTKS is and how the addition/removal mechanism works. The other eleven admitted they had never received an official explanation. Observations on May 5, 2026, at the village office found no bulletin boards, brochures, or posters explaining DTKS, PKH criteria, or complaint procedures. Revida (2021) emphasizes that transparency enables the public to freely access information at every stage of public policy.

Direct quotation:

“I heard about PKH from my neighbor, but I don't know the requirements or how to register. The village office never explained it.” (Mrs. S, non-beneficiary resident, interview, April 14, 2026)

Second finding: Village deliberations are not functioning effectively as a forum for participatory transparency. Based on observations of two deliberation sessions (May 6–7, 2026), these forums appeared ceremonial rather than substantive. At the first meeting, 23 people attended: village head, four village officials, two community leaders, one PKH facilitator, and 15 residents. Of the 15 residents, 11 were active PKH recipients specifically invited by their RT heads; only four attended on their own initiative. Notably, no unregistered but eligible residents attended because they were unaware of the meeting. This pattern reflects what Suyatno and Raharjo (2023) term “procedural formalism,” where the legality of the process is prioritized over substantive participation. Darmanto (2023) notes that good governance requires balanced interaction between the state and society, with trust and active participation as foundational pillars.

Third finding: Complaint channels are not functioning. Formally, residents can submit objections through PKH facilitators or the Social Services Department. However, most informants who felt eligible but were not listed admitted they did not know the complaint procedure. Of the eight residents who claimed to meet eligibility criteria but were not listed, only one had ever formally filed a complaint. This experience reveals three simultaneous weaknesses: (1) village officials lack authority or knowledge to follow up on complaints; (2) the escalation pathway to the Social Affairs Office lacks a transparent tracking system; and (3) there is no feedback mechanism to inform complainants about the status of their complaints. Majid and Zaerudin (2023) demonstrate that complaint channels in PKH implementation are often ineffective due to limited public access and weak response mechanisms.

3.3. Accountability

According to Bagiana (2023), accountability in public sector governance encompasses three elements: (a) transparency regarding resource use, (b) accountability for performance outcomes, and (c) openness to public oversight. Applied to PKH distribution in Pesanggrahan Village, the findings indicate that current accountability practices have not met ideal standards. Although a formal reporting mechanism exists (monthly accountability reports prepared

by PKH facilitators and submitted to the Social Affairs Office), these reports are merely administrative.

Direct quotation (PKH facilitator):

“We submit reports every month on time. But the reports only cover how much money was distributed and to whom. We don’t have a mechanism to verify whether recipients are still eligible or if new poor households have emerged.” (PKH facilitator, interview, April 10, 2026)

Azzahra et al. (2025) explain that accountability practices in social assistance distribution in Jakarta generally align with public accountability theory, although challenges remain, such as data discrepancies resulting from update processes that do not operate in real-time. This confirms that data inaccuracies are not merely a local phenomenon. Similar challenges have been identified in decentralized welfare systems in other developing countries, where weak local administrative capacity and elite influence frequently undermine targeting accuracy.

Community participation in monitoring is very low. Of the eight active recipients interviewed, not a single one had ever been invited to participate in re-verification regarding their eligibility since their names were first included. All evaluation mechanisms operate in a top-down manner and are oriented solely toward administrative interests.

Direct quotation (beneficiary):

“I was registered three years ago and have received assistance every three months. No one has ever asked me if my condition has changed or if I still deserve it.” (Mrs. R, PKH beneficiary, interview, April 15, 2026)

3.4. Structural and Cultural Barriers

This study identified four barriers, both structural and cultural:

1. Low human resource capacity at the village level. Kendi (2023) explains that successful policy implementation depends heavily on sufficient administrative capacity. Village SIKS-NG operators admitted they had never attended formal training on data update procedures since beginning the job two years ago.

2. Inadequate information technology infrastructure. Azzahra et al. (2025) note that non-real-time update processes are a main challenge in maintaining data accuracy. Observations revealed that computers used to access SIKS-NG were over six years old and frequently experienced unstable internet connections.

3. Insufficient outreach to residents. Over the past two years, there have been no structured outreach or awareness-raising activities regarding DTKS or PKH mechanisms in Pesanggrahan Village. Revida (2021) emphasizes that without effective outreach, the public’s right to access information is unfulfilled.

4. Social and political dynamics at the village level. Based on interviews, evidence suggests that social proximity and kinship ties between village officials and potential beneficiaries influenced the proposal and determination of PKH eligibility. Suyatno and Raharjo (2023) refer to such conditions as a distortion of local culture in the social data collection process.

Direct quotation (non-beneficiary resident):

“I know several people who receive PKH even though they are better off than me. But their families are close to the village head. I don’t dare complain because I’m afraid of being ostracized.” (Mr. S, resident not registered, interview, April 18, 2026)

3.5. Analytical Discussion: Linking Findings to Theory

Returning to Bagiana’s (2023) accountability framework, the findings reveal a disconnection between formal accountability (reports submitted) and substantive accountability (actual data accuracy and community oversight). The village government fulfills procedural requirements but fails to ensure that DTKS data reflects ground realities. This supports the concept of “symbolic accountability” (Purwanto et al., 2021), where reporting mechanisms exist but lack feedback loops and public participation. The findings also indicate the presence of informal governance practices, where social proximity and kinship relations influence administrative decision-making beyond formal regulatory procedures.

Furthermore, the cultural barrier of kinship-based selection aligns with Suyatno and Raharjo’s (2023) notion of “local culture distortion,” where informal social networks override formal eligibility criteria. This suggests that improving transparency and accountability requires not only technical fixes (better IT, training) but also cultural change in how village officials interact with their communities.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has comprehensively examined the conditions of transparency and accountability in the DTKS update process and PKH distribution in Pesanggrahan Village. The main findings indicate that both aspects have not functioned as they should. This is evident from the continued occurrence of inclusion errors and exclusion errors in the beneficiary list, limited public access to information regarding the DTKS, the ineffective functioning of complaint channels, and the minimal participation of residents in village deliberations. The study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that procedural compliance in welfare administration does not automatically produce substantive accountability or accurate targeting outcomes.

These various issues do not arise in isolation. They are interrelated and influenced by more fundamental structural factors, namely: limited capacity of village officials, inadequate technological infrastructure, a near absence of public outreach to residents, and local socio-political dynamics that sometimes undermine the objectivity of the data collection process.

Based on these findings, this study recommends: (1) strengthening the village deliberation mechanism as a participatory social verification forum, including ensuring the presence of unregistered resident groups; (2) enhancing the capacity of village officials through structured training programs covering technical aspects of SIKS-NG, DTKS regulations, and the facilitation of participatory deliberations; (3) the development of a community-based information system that allows for data updates that are more responsive to the changing circumstances of beneficiaries; and (4) increased cross-agency oversight of the DTKS updating process at the village level.

Policy reforms should prioritize participatory verification systems, transparent complaint mechanisms, and periodic independent audits of DTKS data at the village level.

Limitations of this study include its single-village focus, which limits generalizability, and the cross-sectional design, which captures only one point in time. Future research should employ comparative case studies across multiple villages and

longitudinal designs to observe changes in transparency and accountability over time.

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