

Is village fund direct cash assistance effective for the poor affected by Covid-19 in Central Java?



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the government policy implementation in assisting communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through the Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance (BLT DD). This research is important to assess the success of policies that have been implemented by the government in the field. Data were collected from village funds realized in the Central Java Province in 2020. The regional government's financial performance assessment was analyzed using secondary data. The validity and reliability analysis of the questionnaire data were also used to measure the performance of BLT DD management. The results of secondary data processing showed that the performance of BLT DD management is running effectively and efficiently. Meanwhile, the primary data processing results from the questionnaire indicated that the management has been going well, starting from the planning, implementation, responsibility, professionalism, and accountability stages of the village government apparatus as the spearhead of BLT DD management. The implication of the study is the BLT DD distribution through a transfer to the bank account of each beneficiary.

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1. Introduction

Prior to the declaration of the COVID-19 virus, a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, 2 cases had already been reported in Indonesia on March 2, 2020. Its inception had significantly affected the health, social and economic sectors globally. According to preliminary studies, as many as 22.734 (2.9%) deaths of 765.350 globally confirmed cases were recorded on January 3, 2020. Meanwhile, in Central Java, data on victims who died from the virus as of January 3, 2020, were recorded at 5.914 people, or 6.19 % of the total 95.599 confirmed cases ([Komite Penanggulangan Covid-19 dan Pemulihan Ekonomi Nasional, 2021](#)). The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted economic activity as indicated by a decline in the national economic growth rate in the second semester of 2020 to minus 5.32%, and a decrease to 5.94% in the Central Java Province. This condition is bound to impact social problems further when left unchecked and without taking the right actions to reduce the continuous decline ([Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021](#)).

Among the potential spatial problems are the widening gap between income groups and the increasing urban-rural disparity, which impacts the occurrence of intergenerational poverty. This happened due to the impact of the pandemic, which suppressed the entire economy across regions, including those in villages. Seasonal urban workers who migrated from rural areas due to the pandemic face a lack of jobs, which prompts them to return to their villages, thereby triggering the spread of the virus to the countryside. The village government can contribute to dealing with the impact of this pandemic by relying on its economic and social resources, especially the Village Fund as well as the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa - APBDes*). The

Village Fund can be used to support and handle the impact of the pandemic at the village and household levels.

Meanwhile, the village budget allocation available in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget can be used to realize the central government's rapid action program in tackling the impact of the pandemic. Therefore, it can complement other programs that aim to minimize social and economic impacts. This fund does not need a new system because adequate facilities and infrastructure already support it; hence it can be implemented by the concerned officials. The use of village funds to overcome the impact of this pandemic can also build the legitimacy and credibility of the village government through local problem solving and by ensuring accountability for program implementation supported by the availability of optimal monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. The government pays special attention to the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy by issuing law no. 1/2020 concerning State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability for Handling the Corona Virus Disease 2019 Pandemic. Article 2 paragraph (1) letter (i) stated that certain activities, such as adjusting allocations and cutting or delaying budget distribution, are needed to prioritize budget allocations to regions and villages. The purpose of "prioritizing the use of Village Funds" is for direct cash assistance for the poor and activities related to handling the pandemic impact. Therefore, it is necessary to study the policy implementation in the field to determine whether it can be conducted quickly and accurately without deviation or moral hazard ([Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang No. 1/2020](#)).

In 2020, the national village fund budget was set at IDR 71.19 trillion, while its allocation for the Central Java Province was IDR 8.12 trillion. During this period, the implementation of Bantuan Langsung Tunai Dana Desa (BLT DD) was carried out from stages I to IX with a national target of 74,954 villages. Meanwhile, in the Central Java Province, the target for the BLT DD distribution was 7,809 villages spread across 29 regencies ([Direktorat Jenderal Perimbangan Keuangan, 2021](#)). The BLT-DD policy program in Central Java was implemented in 9 stages with Beneficiary Families (KPM) target in 7,809 villages. The KPM target of the BLT DD policy is intended to avoid duplication with other government programs, including the Hopeful Family Program, Non-Cash Food Assistance, and Temporary Direct Community Assistance or Cash Direct Assistance ([Direktorat Jenderal Perimbangan Keuangan, 2021](#)). Village Head was mandated to collect data on residents who meet the requirements to receive BLT DD. The initial problems associated with the data collection process were villages with several BLT (Direct Cash Assistance) recipients that fulfilled the criteria. However, the budget allocation used was inadequate because the number of recipients was larger than the available budget.

BLT DD, as a new social safety net program, disbursed IDR 2.44 trillion as of December 23, 2020, in Central Java from the total of IDR 71.19 trillion allocated to 2020 villages. The amount of funds used for this program varied from 25% to 35% depending on the portion received by the village government. Minister of Village Regulation Number 6 of 2020 issued April 14, 2020, on the development of disadvantaged areas, and transmigration number 11 of 2019 concerning Priority for the use of Village Funds in 2020 are the regulations that form the basis of guidelines relating to provisions, mechanisms and data collection until the implementation of the BLT DD provision. The Village Minister Regulation Number 6 of 2020 Article 8A has stipulated requirements for assistance recipients, including families who have lost their livelihoods or jobs and those prone to chronic illness ([Peraturan Menteri Desa PDTT Nomor 6 Tahun 2020](#)). In addition to the above-mentioned regulations, the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration issued Circular Number 8 of 2020 regarding responding to COVID-19 and Affirmation of Village Cash Intensive Work. The Circular regulates the allocation of direct cash assistance based on the ceiling of funds received by each village. Furthermore, villages that receive allocation less than IDR 800 million, IDR 800 million-1.2 billion, and above IDR 1.2 billion are allocated direct cash assistance of 25%, 30%, and 35%, respectively. The inability of the determined scheme to fulfill the community needs is due to the use of a fund allocation of more than 35% with the regional government's approval ([Surat Edaran Menteri Desa, Pembangunan Daerah tertinggal dan Transmigrasi Nomor 8 Tahun 2020](#)). In a rapidly changing situation due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Health and other sectors, the village government must ensure the distribution of BLT DD in an orderly, fair, targeted, and timely manner for proper administrative reporting.

Study from [Yunianti \(2015\)](#) analyzed the efficiency and effectiveness of the village income and expenditure budget in Argodadi village, Bantul Regency, from 2010 to 2013. This is in addition to determining an efficiency measurement approach based on the ratio of the total realization of regional

expenditures to the revenues is based on the Regional Original Income realization compared to the target based on real potential. The results showed that the *APBDes* of Argodadi Village from 2010 to 2013 were inefficient, while financial performance was very effective. Study from [Siregar and Syam \(2017\)](#) stated the effectiveness and efficiency of village financial management in Deli Serdang Regency using 2016 data based on the *Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 690, 900-327 of 1996*. The results showed that village financial management in Deli Serdang Regency is effective but less efficient due to the targeted use of funds.

A study on the effectiveness of direct cash assistance from village funds for the poor affected by COVID-19 was also carried out in Talaitad Village, Suluun Tareran Regency, South Minahasa Regency using a qualitative descriptive data analysis technique approach with data obtained through oral and written information, direct observations in the field, and documents related to the study object by [Maun \(2020\)](#). The study results indicate that the distribution of Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance follows a predetermined mechanism. The concerned government has also worked according to procedures, and the determination of beneficiaries has been right on target. Other studies related to the effectiveness of Village Fund management and the effectiveness of BLT DD management were carried out by [Aziz \(2016\)](#), [Dethan \(2019\)](#), [Kambey \(2017\)](#), [Hariandja and Budiman \(2020\)](#), [Iping \(2020\)](#), [Nurahmawati and Hartini \(2020\)](#), [Prihandini \(2021\)](#), [Lihardi and Freffy \(2021\)](#), [Arumdani et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Aseh et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Azhari and Suhartini \(2021\)](#), [Hafni et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Herdiana et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Paat et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Saroh and Panjaitan \(2021\)](#), [Sasuwuk et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Witarsa et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Yendra and Wetsi \(2021\)](#), [Lonteng et.al. \(2022\)](#), and [Purnawan et.al. \(2022\)](#). [Mardiasmo \(2018\)](#) stated that achieving goals through operational activities implies spending the final targets wisely.

Based on the findings in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the distribution of the BLT DD program in the Central Java Province, managers in regencies and villages are entitled to receive a limited allocation for the poor affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These conditions are compiled in the form of questions to managers and communities receiving BLT DD regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of direct cash assistance for those affected by the pandemic. The focus of the study made in the form of a questionnaire is in the following stages: 1) Planning, 2) Implementation, 3) Accountability, 4) Professionalism and 5) Village Apparatus ([Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 113 Tahun 2014](#)). Several open-ended questions related to problems that occurred during the distribution of BLT DD to communities. This is in addition to expectations and suggestions for the program ([Peraturan Menteri Desa PDTT Nomor 6 Tahun 2020](#)). [Sofi \(2021\)](#) stated that the implementation of BLT DD is still experiencing various challenges, including limited village fund budgets for BLT, the validity of data on BLT DD recipients and the infrastructure supporting the distribution of BLT DD. Therefore, research related to the BLT DD distribution policy is quite interesting to study.

2. Method

This study consists of primary and secondary data. [Sugiyono \(2015\)](#) stated that primary data sources are collected directly, while secondary data are not collected directly from sources. In this study, primary data consisted of respondents including 1 regency employee and 2 village officials who managed BLT DD, as well as 8 respondents from 2 different villages who received BLT DD. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from reports on the distribution of BLT DD in each stage. According to [Effendi and Singarimbun \(1995\)](#), the population is a generalization used to determine the quantity and characteristics of the study material. The population in this study comprises the BLT DD manager at the regency and village levels and the receivers. The sample is in the province of Central Java, consisting of 29 regencies, 7.809 villages with 1.154.442 BLT DD Beneficiary Families (Keluarga Penerima Manfaat). The sample is part of the population with similar characteristics and is used to represent the entirety of the existing population. Therefore, due to the abundance of populations in this study, data were collected from 319 samples.

[Alreck & Settle \(1995\)](#) stated that for a large population, a minimum sample size of approximately 100 respondents and a maximum sample of 1.000 respondents can be used. The quota sampling technique was used to determine a sample of the population with certain characteristics [Sugiyono \(2001\)](#). [Margono \(2004\)](#) stated that the total population is not taken into account in the quota sampling technique, but is classified into several groups based on quorum. In this study, the groups were divided according to the regency area, and each was given a share of respondents consisting of one regency

employee, 2 village officials who managed BLT DD, and 2 villages with 4 respondents receiving BLT DD. Data were collected in this study through direct observation and questionnaires. The observation process is associated with collecting data directly at the location to ensure accuracy. The BLT DD randomly distributed in certain areas was monitored and evaluated through the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP) team. The questionnaire contains the implementation of the BLT DD distribution management in the village and obstacles that are still happening in the field.

In this study, the target to be measured is the effectiveness of the BLT DD distribution for the poor in Central Java. The effectiveness level of BLT DD distribution in the Central Java Province in 2020 was measured by comparing the realized budget with targeted [Mahsun \(2009\)](#) as follows:

$$\text{Effectiveness} = \frac{\text{BLT DD budget realization}}{\text{BLT DD budget target}} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

The criteria for the effectiveness of the spending budget according to the *Minister of Home Affairs Decree No. 690.900-327 of 1996*, a). Very effective, if the value is more than 100%; b). Effective, if the value is between 90% - 100%; c). Quite effective, if the value is between 80% - 90%; d). Less effective, if the value is between 60% - 80%; e). Ineffective, if the value is below 60%. Meanwhile, to strengthen the quantitative calculation results of BLT DD distribution effectiveness for the community in Central Java, the questionnaire previously collected from the respondents were further tested using Microsoft Excel. The validity test in this study was conducted to ensure that the questions outlined can be used to measure the target. Construct validity can be obtained by calculating the correlation between each question and the total score. The product-moment correlation formula in this study is as follows:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum XY) - (\sum X \sum Y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}} \quad (2)$$

where r is the Product moment correlation value; X is selected score value; Y is total score selected and n is the number of samples. After obtaining the r -value, it is further tested to determine the significance of the correlation value by comparing the r -count with the r -table at a critical number of 1% to 5%. The questions contained in the questionnaire have construct validity with a significant value, where the r -count is greater than the r -table. Statistically, the questions contained in the questionnaire have internal consistency and can be used to measure the same aspects by [Umar \(2005\)](#). This reliability test is used to obtain an index number utilized as a guide for the consistency of a measuring instrument with similar symptoms. Social phenomena such as attitudes, opinions, and individual perceptions are objects that are difficult to measure consistently. The techniques used to measure reliability include the test-retest, the Spearman_Brown, the K-R20, the K-R21, the Cronbach's alpha (α), and the observation techniques. This study uses Cronbach's alpha (α) because it is very suitable for determining a reliable instrument with a score between 1 and 5 ([Umar, 2005](#)). The reliability formula using Cronbach's alpha (α) technique is as follows:

$$r_{k-1} = \left[\frac{K}{k-1} \right] \left[1 - \frac{\sum \delta^2}{\delta^2} \right] \quad (3)$$

Where r is the instrument reliability; k is the number of question items; δ is the total variance and $\sum \delta^2$ is the number of item variances. The formula for the total variance (δ) conducted as follows:

$$\delta = \frac{\sum X^2 - \left(\frac{(\sum X)^2}{n} \right)}{n} \quad (4)$$

Where n is the number of sample and X is the selected score value. The classification of the reliability assessment results can be divided into four points, namely excellent with Cronbach's alpha value > 0.90 , high with a value of $0.70-0.90$, moderate with a value of $0.50-0.70$, and low with a value of < 0.50 . The reliability value of Cronbach's alpha below 0.50 is still reliable, though low by [Hinton et al. \(2004\)](#).

3. Results and Discussion

Overall the report on the realization and use of BLT DD in 2020 is very effective. This can be seen from the comparison ratio between the realizations of the BLT DD budget compared to the distribution

target in 29 regencies at a ratio level of 102.56 percent. However, regencies have not effectively managed BLT DD, namely Blora, with a value of 33.14 percent. Regencies categorized as quite effective with a value between 80%-90% include Pekalongan, Magelang, Karanganyar, and Wonosobo. Furthermore, the area included in the effective category between 90%-100% consists of the Kebumen, Grobogan, Rembang, and Pati regencies. Meanwhile, 20 other regencies were included in the very effective category with more than 100 percent value. The target for the distribution of BLT DD to 1.154.442 beneficiary families in 2020 exceeded the planned set. The initial target for distribution in 2020 was realized by 1.183.955 families, or 102.6 percent of the set target. The number of beneficiary families who received BLT DD in 2020 compared to data on the number of poor people in rural Central Java amounted to 2.201.400 as of September 2020. Therefore, it provided social security protection to 53.78 percent of the poor in rural Central Java.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Description	Respondent
Respondent Age:	
- 20-30 Years old	29
- 31-40 Years old	77
- 41-50 Years old	72
- Above 51 Years old	141
Gender:	
- Male	173
- Female	146
Education:	
- Elementary School/ Junior High School/ Senior High School	258
- D1/DII/DIII/S1/S2/S3	61
BLT DD Manager:	
- Regency Level	29
- Village Level	58
- BLT DD beneficiary	232

Source: data processing

Table 1 shows that primary data were collected from questionnaires distributed to respondents in 29 regencies. The questionnaire consists of 3 parts: the characteristics of the respondent's identity, a list of statements that can represent the variables generated, and open-ended questions on the main information needed. Some of the questions in the characteristics of the respondent's identity include their age, gender, education, agency (for BLT DD managers at the Regency and Village levels), and domicile. The list section consists of 31 statements representing BLT DD management variables, including the planning stage, implementation stage, accountability, professionalism, and accountability of the village apparatus. Meanwhile, the open-ended questions consist of 3 items for all respondents and 7 for the beneficiary community.

Table 2. Value of BLT DD Management

Valuation Variable	Average Score
Planning Stage	4.08
Implementation Stage	4.27
Accountability	4.30
Professionality	4.20
Village Apparatus Accountability	4.22
Overall Average	4.21

Source: data processing

In the questionnaire on the BLT DD management consisting of 5 variables and 31 statements, respondents are asked to provide an assessment of their views on the management of BLT DD using a Likert scale with a value of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Table 2 shows overall the distribution process has been going adequately, as indicated by the average value of the questionnaire statements submitted to respondents by 4.21 on a scale of 5. The highest average score is the accountability and implementation stage and the lowest score is planning stage.

Table 3. The Validity Test of BLT DD

Item	R-value	R Table (0.05)	Conclusion
Validity Test of BLT DD for Planning Stage			
1	0.301	0.113	Valid
2	0.272	0.113	Valid
3	0.287	0.113	Valid
4	0.271	0.113	Valid
5	0.513	0.113	Valid
Validity Test of BLT DD for Implementation Stage			
1	0.145	0.113	Valid
2	0.132	0.113	Valid
3	0.140	0.113	Valid
4	0.140	0.113	Valid
5	0.142	0.113	Valid
6	0.171	0.113	Valid
7	0.156	0.113	Valid
8	0.272	0.113	Valid
9	0.154	0.113	Valid
10	0.167	0.113	Valid
Validity Test of BLT DD for Accountability Stage			
1	0.307	0.113	Valid
2	0.292	0.113	Valid
3	0.309	0.113	Valid
4	0.332	0.113	Valid
Validity Test of DD-BLT for Management Professional			
1	0.176	0.113	Valid
2	0.208	0.113	Valid
3	0.179	0.113	Valid
4	0.213	0.113	Valid
5	0.187	0.113	Valid
6	0.253	0.113	Valid
Validity Test of Village for Apparatus Accountability in managing BLT DD			
1	0.199	0.113	Valid
2	0.180	0.113	Valid
3	0.178	0.113	Valid
4	0.220	0.113	Valid
5	0.246	0.113	Valid
6	0.248	0.113	Valid

Source: data processing

Table 3 shows that the validity test for each statement item on the BLT DD for planning stage, implementation stage, accountability stage, management professional and apparatus accountability in managing BLT DD variable obtained a value above the critical number of 5%, therefore, the statements were significant. In statistical language, these statements have internal consistency; hence, they can measure the same aspect and can be used as an instrument. Each variables has different items and BLT DD for implementation stage has more items than other variables. Table 4 shows all dimensions of BLT DD management obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.50. Therefore it is reliable in accordance with the research conducted by (Hinton et al., 2004).

Table 4. Reliability Test for BLT DD Management

BLT DD Management	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Criteria
Planning	0.52	Moderate
Implementation	0.90	High
Accountability	0.77	High
Professionality	0.94	Excellent
Accountability	0.91	Excellent

Source: data processing

The questionnaire submitted to respondents consists of are open-ended questions intended to obtain more specific information. A total of 81 or 25 percent of the respondents stated that there were still problems in the BLT DD distribution, including those related to regulations for its distribution which frequently changed. Furthermore, the criteria for BLT DD recipients were more specific; hence it is right on target despite the delays in distribution and implementation without paying proper attention to health protocols. A total of 199 or 62 percent of the respondents provided input or proposals related to the BLT DD distribution. These include suggestions that the policy for granting BLT DD should continue in 2021 and criteria for its recipients to be more clarified for the correct distribution of suggestions. Others include recipients' quotas, which are increased or divided equally without causing jealousy among the community members. The coordination between ministries or institutions involved in the management of BLT DD is in accordance with the proposals for making recipients accounts. Therefore, it tends to avoid crowds in distribution and a proposal to increase the nominal amount of BLT DD. Respondents anticipate the even distribution of BLT DD to people who meet the criteria as recipients, it does not cause social jealousy, and assistance will continue to be provided until the pandemic ends. This BLT DD eases the burden on the poor affected by the pandemic and increases people's purchasing power, therefore the economy can recover.

A total of 232 or 100 percent of the respondents who received BLT DD stated that the policy assisted them with their basic daily needs. This shows that the Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance (BLT DD) program conducted for the poor by the government during 2020 has been effective with the ability to buy basic necessities, especially those related to the availability of nutritious food. A total of 29 or 12.5 percent of the respondents who have received BLT DD stated that they were also assisted by the government. A total of 29 or 12.5 percent of the respondents who had received BLT DD stated that they did not agree with its continuation. The result of this research show that the distribution of BLT DD in the Central Java region is felt to be beneficial for the community but also experiences the same problems as the distribution of BLT DD in other regions, as research has been conducted by [Iping \(2020\)](#), [Nurahmawati and Hartini \(2020\)](#), [Prihandini \(2021\)](#), [Lihardi and Freffy \(2021\)](#), [Arumdani et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Aseh et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Azhari and Suhartini \(2021\)](#), [Hafni et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Herdiana et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Paat et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Saroh and Panjaitan \(2021\)](#), [Sasuwuk et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Witarsa et.al. \(2021\)](#), [Yendra and Wetsi \(2021\)](#), [Lonteng et.al. \(2022\)](#), and [Purnawan et.al. \(2022\)](#).

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis results related to the management of BLT DD distribution using both primary and secondary data, the following conclusions were made the management and targets of the 2020 BLT DD program in the Central Java Province are running effectively. The questionnaire data used to measure the effectiveness of BLT DD management has the required validity and reliability, calculated using the construct validity and Cronbach's alpha reliability. Therefore, the questionnaire results can be relied upon to measure each management stage. There are still problems that need to be followed up in the management of BLT DD and some suggestions given by respondents to improve the program for future usage to provide optimal benefits for the community.

There are still BLT DD recipients who receive other assistance from the government and anticipate that this assistance will be stopped. Therefore, there is no duplication in providing assistance to the community in the future. This study provides the following suggestions to some of the problems that still occur in the field the synchronization of policies for providing assistance during the pandemic with the coordinator of the Ministry of Social Affairs based on single data on the population identity number to realize transparency and accuracy in targeting and aiding recipients to avoid duplication. The existence of clear and easy-to-understand criteria in determining the target recipients of assistance in the community is supported by an adequate allocation of funds to assist with real conditions to avoid social turmoil. The BLT DD distribution is to apply strict health protocols to avoid the spread of the virus because presently, there are still complaints on mass crowds in the implementation process. An alternative policy that can be implemented is the BLT DD distribution through a transfer to the bank account of each beneficiary.

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