

Public Employee Accountability in Official Family Planning and Population Control (DPPKB) Bekasi Regency

Kristian Widya Wicaksono^{1*}, Kania Anggraeny Ramadhan¹

¹Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social dan Political Sciences, Parahyangan Catholic University

*Correspondence Email: kristian.widya@unpar.ac.id

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Abstract: *Accountability of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in the Official Family Planning and Population Control (DPPKB) Bekasi Regency experienced a problem because they could not look closer to each other in the work deployment. Furthermore, as part of public employee accountability, the people of Bekasi Regency lack a channel to monitor the performance of the ASN in the DPPKB of Bekasi Regency. This research aims to describe the accountability of ASN in DPPKB Bekasi Regency. This study utilized Han and Perry's Public Employee Accountability theory. This theory has five dimensions: attributability, observability, evaluability, answerability, and consequentiality. The quantitative approach is used in this study. Surveying is a type of research. Data is collected by distributing questionnaires to all DPPKB Bekasi Regency employees. Consequently, the sampling technique used in this study was a saturated sample, in which the entire population of 40 ASN in DPPKB was sampled. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using a univariable descriptive statistical analysis method that measures the frequency distribution, the central tendency, namely the median, and the distribution of the variability studied, namely the interval index. According to the findings of this study, most ASN within the DPPKB Bekasi Regency have demonstrated accountability as public employees in executing their duties since they can be asked to explain actions taken or not taken against stakeholders with confidence in the outcomes based on the evaluation results.*

Keywords: *public employee accountability; accountability; open government; public management.*

Introduction

DPPKB Bekasi Regency is a component of population control and family planning implementation. This institution's primary mission is to lead, formulate, organize, promote, and evaluate the development and implementation of regional population control and family planning policies. This institution has the following four

functions: (1) Formulating technical policies for population control and family planning; (2) organizing local government affairs in population control and family planning; (3) providing guidance, executing duties, and evaluating population control and family planning; and (4) performing secretarial administration.

To begin this study, the researchers conducted a preliminary study empirically by interviewing three ASN who held top positions at the DPPKB Bekasi. According to the interview's findings, DPPKB has a silo problem concerning employee accountability, wherein ASNs cannot pay attention to one another when carrying out tasks. They frequently walk independently without considering how their respective jobs complement one another. The creation of public services that meet community needs depends on this synergy. It was also discovered that, in terms of accountability, the residents of Bekasi do not yet have a reliable way to track how well the ASN is performing within DPPKB Bekasi.

Based on this background, the researcher posed the following research question: How able are ASNs in the DPPKB Bekasi to demonstrate their accountability as public employees? This study's aim, guided by these research questions, is to describe the ASN's level of accountability in the DPPKB Bekasi.

Accountability research in public administration is continually evolving. Between 2011 and 2017, public administration journals typically published over 150 articles about accountability (Overman, Schillemans, & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021; Kumar, Pandey, & Haldar, 2020). The consequences of delegation of authority to the public sector cause accountability to be a major concern in the study of contemporary public administration (Schillemans et al., 2022; Willems & Van Dooren, 2012; Thomann, Hupe, & Sager, 2018).

The conceptualization of accountability in the public sector focuses on studies at the organizational level (Olsen, 2013; Schillemans, 2016; Overman & Schillemans, 2021; Overman, Schillemans, & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021).

For instance, Starling (2011) defines accountability as a public organization's ability to explain decisions and actions to stakeholders responsible for evaluating public organizations in the political system. Therefore, according to Overman and Schillemans (2021), the literature on accountability in the public sector focuses too much on organizational accountability.

However, lately, accountability research in the public sector has increasingly focused on the individual level of employees. Since accountability will be effective only if everyone within the organization considers accountability a top priority, they consciously adjust their behavior according to the expected direction (Overman & Schillemans, 2021; Overman, Schillemans, & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021). To put it another way, the successful meso-level implementation of accountability mechanisms in the public sector assumes that micro-level decision-makers will change their behavior in response to such mechanisms (Jilke, Olsen, Resh, & Siddiki, 2019). Individual accountability perceptions may strongly impact the public sector because public managers' decisions affect large organizations with significant policy implications (Overman, Schillemans, & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021).

On the other hand, Romzek and Dubnick in Han and Perry (2020) propose a notion of public accountability that asserts that accountability is not just limited to institutions and public employees' ability to explain their decisions and actions but also to their ability to manage and meet varied expectations from within and outside the organization. According to the concept, accountability extends to both public institutions and individuals, in this case, public employees. It is because public employee accountability can be an

effective tool for managing employee affairs, such as selecting awards and punishments, reporting, performance assessment and evaluation systems, and job descriptions, and establishing the rules for conducting work at the individual level (Romzek, 2014).

According to Jabra and Dwivedi in Wirijadinata (2007, pp. 1–2), the accountability of public employees is met when they can carry out their duties and obligations and are held responsible for the decisions and actions they take in the course of carrying out their responsibilities and obligations, following applicable laws and regulations. The perception of the account holders' willingness to hold the performer accountable is the most important factor in an individual's evaluation of an accountability relationship. This perspective is rooted in two crucial aspects of public sector accountability relationships: (1) the perceived legitimacy to exercise authority, and (2) the perceived expertise-based capacity to do so effectively (Overman, Schillemans, & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021).

Conceptually, the notion of individual accountability refers to Bovens' viewpoint. According to Bovens in Overman, Schillemans, and Grimmelikhuijsen (2021), accountability is comprised of an actor, and a forum, with the actor obligated to provide information and clarification about its conduct and the forum able to pose questions, pass judgment, and subject the actor to sanctions based on its behavior. This definition was later used by Han and Perry (2020) to explain the concept of public employee accountability, which is the expectation that a public employee will be asked to explain actions done or not done to the public with confidence in the consequences based on the evaluation

results. It means that when deciding and acting, public employees are always mindful of the future consequences of their evaluation. Researchers consistently use Han and Perry's definition to describe public employees' accountability.

Furthermore, Han and Perry (2020) create five dimensions to measure individual accountability for employees working in public organizations: (1) attributability, (2) observability, (3) evaluability, (4) answerability, and (5) consequentiality. The theoretical framework for understanding why public employees feel accountable and quantifying the impact of accountability systems on specific public employees is based on these five dimensions. According to this theory, employees must link the external accountability system to the individual level when examining and supervising accountability by utilizing a psychological approach to predict individual behavior differences. The individual-level approach suggests that accountability focuses on accountability, i.e., the degree to which a person feels responsible, and not on the organizational system's structure. The fundamental reason for examining accountability at the individual level in the public sector is to gain a better understanding of how accountability is formed through dynamic processes involving the psychological states of individuals and external stimuli. Thus, research on public employee accountability aims to enhance the prediction of individual outcomes for employees in the public sector.

Method

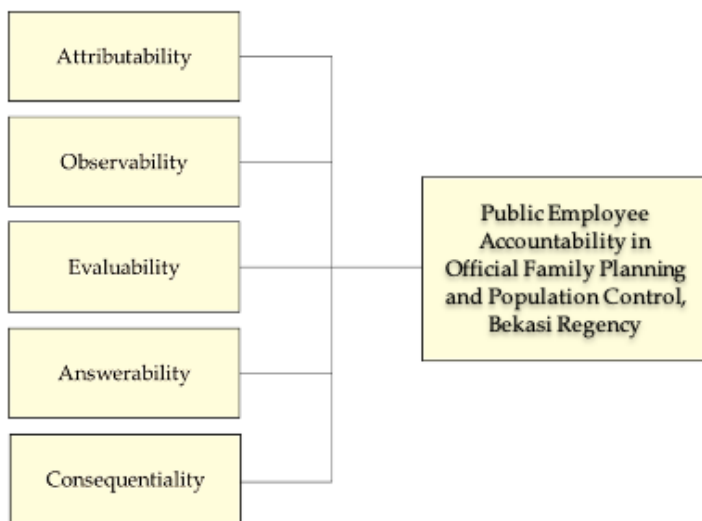
This paper examines employee accountability in the public sector. The study focuses particularly on individual units of analysis. Employee accountability in public organizations is measured by a

variety of factors, including attributability, observability, evaluability, answerability, and consequentiality. Therefore, the researchers tried to devise the research model shown in Figure 1.

Moreover, this study used a quantitative research method as its methodology. According to Creswell (2009), quantitative research examines the relationship between variables to test objective theories. These variables can then be measured with instruments, and the resulting numbered data can be analyzed statistically. Non-experimental research, also known as survey research, is conducted. The primary data were gathered from the responses to questionnaires given to respondents. Since this survey targeted only employees of the DPPKB Bekasi, a non-probability sampling technique was used to determine the number of respondents in this study.

There are 40 total employees at DPPKB Bekasi. As a result, the researchers chose to use saturated samples, turning the entire population into samples. The actual questionnaire was created using a public employee accountability measurement tool that included a list of questions and was based on the five dimensions proposed by Han and Perry (2020). After that, the researchers contextualized it, considering the DPPKB Bekasi's circumstances. The Likert scale is employed: strongly disagree receives a weight of 1, disagree receives a weight of 2, neutral receives a weight of 3, agree receives a weight of 4, and strongly agree receives a weight of 5. Following data collection, a univariable descriptive statistical analysis method was used to determine the variable under the study's frequency distribution, central tendency, and interval index.

Figure 1. Research Model



Source: Adapted from Han and Perry (2020)

Result dan Discussion

The discussion will be conducted using the dimensions from this study. The first dimension is attributability, which means accountable employees want their contributions, mistakes, or work to be

personally identified and linked to them. This dimension is measured by asking three questions: (1) In carrying out work, employees feel cared for by other employees; (2) if there is an error in the implementation of work, the superior will

give sanctions; and (3) there is consistent supervision of employee compliance with applicable policies and procedures in the organization, in this case, the DPPKB Bekasi.

The second dimension is observability, defined as employees' expectation that their work-related activities will be observed by employees from other agencies or external parties to the organization. This dimension is measured by asking three questions: (1) Any party outside the organization can show that employees have done their jobs well; (2) employee errors are easily visible to external parties of the organization; and (3) employees from other government agencies are interested in the performance of employees in the execution of their jobs.

The third dimension is evaluability, an employee's expectation that their activities will be evaluated based on specific criteria, such as formal and informal rules and performance-based evaluations. This dimension is assessed by asking three questions: (1) Employees' work results are strictly evaluated by superiors; (2) employees' performance efforts are strictly evaluated by superiors; and (3) employees frequently receive feedback from superiors.

The fourth dimension is the ability to provide answers, also known as answerability. This dimension is interpreted as an expectation that employees can provide answers by explaining and justifying their actions and decisions in their work. This dimension is assessed by asking three questions: (1) Employees will not make false statements to justify their performance; (2) employees are strictly encouraged to follow organizational procedures and policies; and (3) employees are not permitted to quibble in order to avoid mistakes they make.

The final dimension in this study is consequentiality, defined as employees' expectation that their actions will be recognized by various parties who demand their accountability. This dimension is measured by asking three questions: (1) Employees will be appreciated by all members of the organization when they can carry out their work well, (2) employees' reasonable efforts will eventually be appreciated by all members of the organization; and (3) the workplace will benefit from each employee's implementation of good work.

Table 1. Description of Public Employee Accountability Variable Score

Public Employee Accountability Dimensions	Score	Percentage
Attributability	510	85,00%
Observability	457	76,17%
Evaluability	525	87,50%
Answerability	505	84,17%
Consequentiality	524	87,33%
Average	504,2	84,03%

Source: Obtained from Primary Data

According to the table above, the highest dimensional score is evaluability, which is 87.50%. This demonstrates that employees in the DPPKB Bekasi expect and receive stringent evaluations.

Employees believe that their work results have been rigorously evaluated in terms of quality. The employees also felt that their efforts in carrying out the work had been harshly evaluated. Employees also expect

their managers to provide regular feedback on their work.

The lowest score was 457 with a percentage of 76.17% in the observability dimension. Although this dimension score is not significantly different from other dimensions, it can be said that employees in the DPPKB Bekasi are less open to observations from outside parties. This is evidenced by employees' statements that not all external parties can provide an assessment of their work's implementation. External parties are also unable to identify errors in the execution of work performed by employees of the DPPKB Bekasi. Furthermore, external parties are unable to learn about the performance of employees in the DPPKB Bekasi.

It should not be the case in a democratic era that requires open government. One example of the government's openness is its ability to be accountable to society. Furthermore, the government's funds are derived from the people's taxes. As a result, accountability is essential. The observability aspect of accountability requires attention to

demonstrate the government's seriousness in carrying out accountability. Government organizations, such as the DPPKB Bekasi, must allow the public and other government organizations to provide assessments, suggestions, and criticisms of the work performed by their employees. Then, mistakes made by employees in the execution of work should be easily identified by external parties so that they can be corrected immediately. Afterward, openness must be implemented to allow external parties to learn more about the performance of employees within the DPPKB Bekasi.

After measuring each dimension of public employee accountability, the researchers looked for the total value of the overall questions asked in the study questionnaire. It is accomplished in two ways. The first step is to identify the interval class using the 15 questions from the research questionnaire. Second, the frequency distribution of respondents' responses is sought based on the interval class. The following is a list of its interval classes:

Table 2. Employee Accountability Interval Class

Interval	Category
15-26	Strongly Disagree
27-38	Disagree
39-50	Neutral
51-62	Agree
63-75	Strongly Agree

Source: Obtained from Primary Data

After determining the interval class, the researcher compiled a list of frequency distributions of public

employee accountability in DPPKB. Here is a frequency distribution table for it:

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Public Employee Accountability in DPPKB Bekasi

Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
15-26	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
27-38	Disagree	0	0%
39-50	Neutral	0	0%
51-62	Agree	18	45%

63-75	Strongly Agree	22	55%
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Source: Obtained from Primary Data

According to table 3, a small percentage of respondents (45 percent) believe that ASN in the Bekasi Regency DPPKB are accountable as public employees. Most respondents (55 percent) agreed that ASN in the Bekasi Regency DPPKB demonstrated accountability as public employees. It means that the ASN in the DPPKB has met the expectation that they can be asked to explain actions taken or not taken against stakeholders with confidence in the consequences based on the evaluation results.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that most respondents agreed that ASN in the DPPKB Bekasi were able to demonstrate their accountability as public employees. It can be interpreted to mean that they can meet expectations by explaining to stakeholders every action they take and do not take with confidence in the outcomes based on the evaluation results.

Meanwhile, most respondents stated that the ASN in the DPPKB Bekasi is capable of attributability because every contribution, mistake, or work done can be identified and connected to each ASN individually. Most respondents then stated that each ASN in the DPPKB of Bekasi Regency had an observability aspect because their activities relevant to their work could be seen by employees from other agencies or external parties. Furthermore, many respondents stated that they strongly agreed that every employee in the DPPKB Bekasi possessed an evaluability characteristic because the activities performed by each ASN would be evaluated and given feedback based on

formal and informal rules as well as performance evaluation.

Furthermore, most respondents strongly agree that every employee in the DPPKB Bekasi possesses the attribute of answerability because each employee can provide answers by explaining and justifying the actions and decisions they make during their work. Finally, the majority of respondents strongly agree that every employee in the DPPKB Bekasi has a consequential aspect because each employee's actions are rewarded by various parties who demand accountability in carrying out their work.

This paper's academic contribution is to encourage the improvement of ASN's capacity to provide rationalizations for the actions they undertake. This ability will have implications for the accountability of employees who work for government organizations by increasing public trust in the government.

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