

Can Social Safety Net (SSN) Tackle Poverty During Covid-19 Pandemic in Tabalong Regency?

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Abstract

The recent enhancement in poverty has occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government designed several policies to protect vulnerable populations and reduce poverty. One policy was the social safety net program (SSN). The effectiveness of the SSN program in reducing poverty contains academic debates. On the one hand, the research results showed no influence of the SSN on poverty reduction. So this study aims to analyze poverty in the Tabalong Regency. This research used primary data. Binomial Logistics Regression was employed in the analysis. Model testing included control variables represented by the number of household members, age, gender, education, and occupation of the primary household member. Simultaneous model testing results showed that the SSN program affected poverty in Tabalong Regency. Partially model testing results showed that not all SSN programs affect poverty in Tabalong Regency. Only the SSN program of Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance and Regional Government Routine Social Assistance involved poverty. In addition, the control variables also affected the chances of a household being poor or not poor, except for the age variable. The odds ratio value meant that households receiving these two programs had 0.283 and 0.370 times the probability of being not poor.

Keywords

logistic regression; poverty; social safety net



I. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has punched various countries around the world, including Indonesia. There has been a loss in income, increased unemployment, and poverty due to the pandemic. In their research, Sumner et al. (2020) also confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic could increase global poverty for the first time since 1990. The negative impact of the pandemic could restore poverty levels to 30 years ago, mainly in developing countries. The same case happened in Indonesia. According to data, since 1999, the percentage of the poor had a downward trend. However, during the pandemic, there was an increase in the poor ratio at the end of 2020. The main cause of poverty is closely related to economic factors (Ikhsan & Pribadi, 2015). The inability to fulfill the minimum standard of living is why poverty occurs.

The outbreak of this virus has an impact of a nation and Globally (Ningrum *et al*, 2020). The presence of Covid-19 as a pandemic certainly has an economic, social and psychological impact on society (Saleh and Mujahiddin, 2020). Covid 19 pandemic caused all efforts not to be as maximal as expected (Sihombing and Nasib, 2020).

Based on World Bank (2020), the lockdown policies implemented in various countries due to pandemics seriously impacted poverty through health aspects and loss of income. The World Bank also predicted that the economic slowdown in multiple countries would make it difficult for people to get out of poverty. The Indonesian government has

formulated various policies to protect vulnerable people affected by pandemics. Law No. 2 of 2020 was how the government tried to protect the country's economy from a pandemic. The Indonesian government carried out three things in the policy simultaneously handling the pandemic, including anticipation of the financial system, economic stimulus, and social assistance.

Social assistance afforded by the government to the people in Indonesia is not something new. Long before the Covid-19 pandemic surge in Indonesia, the government had made various efforts to reduce poverty. Before the epidemic, it was apparent that there was a good impact of government social assistance on lowering poverty in Indonesia. Data obtained from BPS (2021) showed that household assistance with social safety nets (SSN) increases every year was around 2.6 percent. This increase indicated that the government was trying to curtail the percentage of poor people in Indonesia, marked by a downward trend in poor people percentage starting in 2016.

There was a significant increase in the percentage of the poor in 2020, so the government-provided social safety net program. The government has implemented various social assistance and subsidy schemes to fulfill fundamental rights, ease dependents, and improve citizens' standard of living. The Encyclopedia Britannica explained the concept of the welfare state. It is related to the state's responsibility from the government as the front guard in protecting and prospering its people's economic and social welfare.

Social Safety Net (SSN) became one of the forms of government intervention to alter the impact of the crisis on people who have the potential to be affected by social and economic effects. The SSN included Hope Family Program (PKH), non-Cash Assistance, Cash Social Assistance, Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance, Pre-Employment Cards, Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), and Routine Social Assistance from the Regional Government. In times of crisis and limited funding sources, the implementation of the SSN program encountered many obstacles. On the other hand, the government hoped that SSN could minimize the impact of the crisis so that the percentage of poor people did not increase or even decrease.

Many countries implemented the SSN Program to overcome the economic crisis. Recently, governments have included the SSN Program in the agenda of the vision of sustainable development because of its vital role in fighting hunger, reducing poverty, and reducing social inequality (U.N., 2015). The effectiveness of the SSN in reducing the percentage of the poor contains academic debates because, on the one hand, there were research results that argue that the SSN from the government did not impact poverty reduction. According to the research results by Melati et al. (2021), the component for spending on social assistance did not significantly affect the poverty level. The benefits and impacts received were insignificant and could not help the poor move out of the poverty line. The reason was the difficulty of local governments in identifying the poor and the accuracy of social assistance recipients.

However, many researchers argue that social safety nets were very influential in poverty alleviation programs, including the research of Ahmed et al. (2014) in Bangladesh using descriptive analysis to examine the impact of social safety net programs on poverty alleviation and reducing inequality. Then, Naqvi et al. (2014) showed similar results regarding differences in community welfare after receiving a social safety net program. There was structural stability in the lives of SSN beneficiaries after the program started. This improvement in consumption patterns meant that the existence of the SSN program affects the welfare of the population receiving the SSN program and tends to reduce poverty.

The strong influence of the SSN program on poverty in other countries was also in line with the results of several similar studies in Indonesia. Using the desk review technique, Suharto (2015) found that the SSN program, in the form of PKH, had a considerable impact on poverty reduction in Indonesia, mainly through improving primary school enrollment and health care accessibility. The SSN program in the form of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), according to Dewi & Andrianus (2021), had an impact on poverty in Indonesia. With correlation analysis, this research showed that direct cash assistance was considered more effective and efficient for the community than social assistance in the form of necessities. The argument was that people could spend funds for needs other than food.

Furthermore, Sukmana et al. (2021) used the multiple linear regression method to prove the effectiveness of the SSN program in the form of Cash Social Assistance in reducing. Direct cash assistance could help people's lives in Sidoarjo City. Arapah (2020) examined the SSN program's impact on poverty with a multiple linear regression method. The research showed that the SSN program in the form of PKH significantly influenced the welfare of beneficiary households during the Covid-19 pandemic in the North Barito Regency. Consistent with Bakhtiar & Qodir (2015), PKH significantly influenced poverty.

The effect of the SSN program in general, regardless of the type of assistance in overcoming poverty in Indonesia, was investigated by Rizki (2021) using the correlation analysis method. The research results showed that the SSN on the pandemic had a significant impact. It showed a low increase in the poor percentage during the pandemic. Social aid needed to be more effective since it was necessary to alleviate the load on families, particularly those in poverty, at this time.

This research focused on Tabalong Regency, South Kalimantan Province. Outside of Java, the province of South Kalimantan had the most COVID-19 cases of any other province in the country (Kompas, 2021). If the South Kalimantan Province breaks down into the district level, Tabalong Regency was the area with the second most minor COVID-19 case after Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency. From this data, the possible impact of the pandemic in Tabalong Regency compared to other regencies in South Kalimantan Province was not large enough. However, there was a significant increase in poverty of 0.55 percent (BPS, 2021). Also, Tabalong Regency was ranked the second highest with the percentage of poor people. As we know, the government has poured many funds to support the social safety net program. This implementation program was to achieve various goals in fighting poverty, hunger, and unemployment.

Based on theoretical debates about whether social safety net programs could impact poverty alleviation in various studies that have been carried out both in Indonesia and in other countries and the phenomenon of poverty that occurs in Tabalong Regency as a research locus. This study examined the influence of social safety nets programs on poverty alleviation in the Tabalong Regency during the pandemic. The analysis used in previous research, both domestically and abroad, was only limited to descriptive analysis or only examined one of the SSN program's effects on poverty.

This research examined the effect of each social safety net program, either simultaneously or partially, on poverty. Besides, the Odds Ratio (OR) resulted from influences among the variables. The (OR) interpretation regarded the opportunity for a household to become not poor or poor by SSN stimulus in Tabalong Regency Government using a binary logistic regression approach. In addition, this study included control variables in the model so that the results were not biased.

II. Research Method

The research used quantitative methods primary data, using direct interview techniques with 300 households in all of the sub-district to determine whether the sample accepted or unaccepted the SSN program. In addition, questionnaires were to complete the demographic characteristics of the sampled households, such as age, gender, education, occupation, and consumption expenditures, both food and non-food every month.

The questionnaire used has passed the reliability validity test. The Slovin formula obtained sample allocation from 760 populations, sample by Panel Social Economics Survey BPS. The sampling system of the sampling frame used Simple Random Sampling. The analysis used Binary Logistic Regression Analysis.

This study used nominal data on the dependent variable, defined as poor and not poor. Poor household categories were classified based on household expenditures below the poverty line (World Bank, 2020a). Meanwhile, it used several types of data forms on the independent variables. The independent variable was the SSN, which break down into several SSN types. This study examined the effect of each SSN program in particular. SSN is determined as a categorical variable because the SSN value obtained by each household was constant, where each household got the same nominal rupiah for the same type of SSN.

Likewise, it included other variables that theoretically affected poverty, namely control variables. If the primary independent variable was the research focus, then the control variable was included in the logistic regression model so that the model became robust, efficient in model and reduced the level of bias. The control variables in this study included the number of household members, age, gender, education, and occupation of the primary household member. In this work, binary logistic regression analysis examined the relationship between poverty variables in categorical data. The formula of the binary logistic regression probability model with explanatory and control (Harrel, 2015):

$$g(x) = \text{Ln} \frac{\pi(x)}{(1-\pi(x))} = \frac{\exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_{15} x_{15})}{1 + \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_{15} x_{15})}$$

so that,

$$g(x) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_{15} x_{15}$$

Where $g(x)$ was logit $\pi(x)$; Ln was a natural logarithm; $\pi(x)$ was logistic probability obtained from the formula; β_0 meant regression parameter estimation; $\beta_1 \dots \beta_{15}$ meant parameter estimation of independent variable; $x_1 \dots x_{15}$ meant the independent variable; \exp meant the exponential function; and $\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_{15} x_{15}$ meant *ordinary least square*.

The first was a test for *goodness of fit*. H_0 used in this test was the model fit (there was no difference between the observations and the results of the model's predictions). The test statistic used is X^2 test. If the test value obtained was more significant than the table value less than the p-value (< 0.05), the decision was to reject H_0 . Rejecting H_0 meant that the model form was not fit, so the expected result in *Godness of Fit* was to accept H_0 .

The next test was simultaneous. The test used the statistical value of the *G-test*. H_0 used in this test was $\beta_0 = \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = \beta_6 = \beta_7 = \dots = \beta_{15} = 0$, or there was no significant effect of the independent variable simultaneously on the dependent variable. If $G_{count} > X^2$ or p-value < 0.05 , then this study rejected H_0 . These results meant that there was still one explanatory variable that significantly influenced the dependent.

Partial testing examined the effect of each β_j independently in the generated model. H_0 used in this test was $H_0 : \beta_j = 0$. This formula meant no significant effect exists between one independent variable and the poverty variable. If the results of the *Wald test* were less than the value of α , or p-value < 0.05 , then rejected H_0 . The development significantly influenced one of the independent variables with the poverty variable.

The regression coefficient of the above equation was very difficult to interpret. Therefore, it was using the term *Odds Ratio*. $Odds Ratio = \exp(\beta)$. For example, if odds Ratio is $\exp(-0.242) = 2,72^{-0.242} = 0.785$. With this value, it was possible to deduce that the probability of occurrence of Y was 1 (poor), which was 0.785 times greater if X (social safety net) was 0 (unaccepted SSN) compared to if X was 1 (accepted SSN).

Table 1. Operational Variables in Research

X Variable-SSN Program (Independent Variable) 1 = Accepted; 0 = Unaccepted	Y Variable-Poverty (Dependent Variable)
1. PKH Program	Categorical Data- Poverty 0 = Not Poor 1 = Poor
2. Non-Cash Assistance Program	
3. Cash Social Assistance Program	
4. Village Fund Cash Assistance Program	
5. Pre-Employment Card Assistance Program	
6. Smart Indonesia Program	
7. Routine Social Assistance From Local Government Program	
Control Variable	
1. The number of household members (Ratio Variable)	
2. Gender of the primary household member (1 = Man; 0 = Woman)	
3. Age of the primary household member (Ratio Variable)	
4. Education of the primary household member (0 = College; 1 = High School; 2 = Middle School; 3 = Elementary School; 4 = Do not have a diploma / do not go to school)	
5. Occupation of the primary household member (0 = Agriculture; 1 = Non Agriculture)	

Source: Research Results, 2022

III. Results and Discussion

The results of model could be written as follows: $G(x) = 1.715 + 0.642 PKH + 0.109 Non-Cash + 0.242 Cash Social - 1.263 Village Fund Cash + 0.919 Pre-Employment Card + 0.051 Pip - 0.995 Routine From Local Gov + 0.723 Number Of Households - 1.093 Gender - 0.19 Age - 2.236 Education (1) - 1.679 Education (2) - 0.93 Education (3) - 0.603 Education (4) - 1.102 Occupation$.

From the *goodness of fit test*, the results of the *Hosmer-Lemeshow test* were 6.792. This value was smaller than the χ^2 table (15.50731). According to this number, the *Goddess of Fit* test decision was to accept H_0 , and the sign was likewise greater than 0.05. The outcome meant that the model formed was fit, or there was no difference between the observed model and the predicted model. From the results of the *Hosmer-Lemeshow test*, the SSN programs provided could affect the poverty condition of a household in the Tabalong Regency and the influence of control variables. These results are by Wang et al.

(2021), who also examined the impact of the social safety net on poverty using Logistic Regression. It meant the SSN program influenced reducing poverty in a region.

Table 2. Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Result

Step	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
1	6.972	8	0.559

Source: Logistic Regression Analyzed, 2022

The Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients tested the model coefficient in this analysis. The X^2 value was 107.490. This calculated Chi-Square value was higher than the Chi-Square Table X^2 (0.05; (df-1)) which was only worth 24.9957 and had a significance value of more than 0.005. The decision was to reject H_0 , meaning that at least one independent variable or the explanatory variable had a big impact on the poverty variable. At least one SSN program influenced the poverty condition in the Tabalong Regency.

Table 3. Omnibus Coefficient Test Model

Step	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Step 1	107.49	15	0.000
Block	107.49	15	0.000
Model	107.49	15	0.000

Source: Logistic Regression Analyzed, 2022

Then to see which SSN program influences the poverty condition in Tabalong Regency, it used the *Chi-Square test*. From the parameter estimation results, the several variables, both social safety net program variables and control variables, had a significant relationship with poverty. The significant variable was the Village Fund Direct Cash Program variable, Local Government Social Assistance Social Program, number of household members, gender, education, and occupation of the primary household member.

Table 4. Parameter Estimation

No.	Variable	Estimation Results			
		β	S.E.	Sig.	Exp (β)
1	PKH Program	0.642	0.463	0.165	1.901
2	Non-Cash Assistance Program	0.109	0.414	0.792	1.115
3	Cash Social Assistance Program	-0.242	0.582	0.677	0.785
4	Village Fund Cash Assistance Program	-1.263	0.609	0.038	0.283
5	Pre-Employment Card Assistance Program	0.919	0.942	0.329	2.506
6	Smart Indonesia Program	0.051	0.392	0.897	1.052
7	Routine Social Assistance From Local Government Program	-0.995	0.356	0.005	0.370
8	The number of household members	0.723	0.127	0.000	2.060
9	Gender of the primary household member	-1.093	0.467	0.019	0.335
10	Age of the primary household member	-0.019	0.015	0.193	0.981
11	Education of the primary household member			0.013	
12	Education of the primary household member (1)	-2.239	0.835	0.007	0.107
13	Education of the primary household member (2)	-1.679	0.561	0.003	0.186

14	Education of the primary household member (3)	-.938	0.514	0.068	0.392
15	Education of the primary household member (4)	-.603	0.451	0.181	0.547
16	Occupation of the primary household member	-1.102	0.330	0.001	0.332
	Constant	-1.715	1.526	0.261	0.180

Source: Logistic Regression Analyzed, 2022

In addition, the magnitude of control variables in determining the poverty condition of a household in Tabalong Regency was also interesting to observe. The magnitude value of the control variables such as the number of household members, gender, education, and occupation of the primary household member was the reason why the SSN program provided by the central government had not been able to reduce the probability of households in Tabalong Regency to become poor, because of the large the influence of the control variable. Every household gets the same amount of money from the government, no matter how many people live there, what type of job each person has, or how much money they make each month. This result was in line with Khairati & Syahni's (2020) research that the household members, gender, education, and occupation of the primary household member had a significant effect on poverty in a household.

This analysis also found the magnitude of each explanatory variable's effect on poverty. The extent of the control variable was not seen in the value of R^2 but from the *pseudo value* of R^2 . The control variable education was the highest degree of education the principal household member possessed and was the household's leading source of income. Each level had a significant value, and the exponential value (β) was getting smaller, meaning that the lower the education, the more substantial opportunity for a household to be poor. Bartik & Hershbein (2018) stated that the higher the education of the head of the household member, the better the job they had, which directly affects household income.

In the control variable Education (1) or having a high school education category when compared with the sample having a college education (Reference Category), the significant value meant that households with primary household members with the education of (1) or high school had the opportunity to be poor was more significant than those who had a college education. The same results were also shown by category middle, elementary, and not having a diploma. There was a significant difference in the risk of being poor compared to those with a college education (*reference categories*). The derive meant that the lower the leading household member's education level, the greater the chance of becoming poor than the lead member who had a college education.

The value of Exp (β) in the Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance program variable was 0.283, which meant that households that received SSN in the form of Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance tend to be 0.283 times less poor when compared to households that did not receive the Local Government Social Assistance SSN program. A significance level of less than 0.05 or a value of 0.038 indicated that the existence of the Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance Program tended for someone to be poor or not poor in Tabalong Regency. The estimation findings indicated that the Village Fund's Direct Cash Assistance program is on track. The results of this study were in line with Oktavia & Wihastuti (2020), Agustina et al. (2021), and Armin et al. (2022) that the Village Fund program had an effect on reducing poverty in an area but was slightly different from Darmi & Mujtahid (2019) found that village funds have made a negligible contribution to poverty reduction.

Households that get help from the Local Government Routine Social Assistance SSN program were less likely 0.370 times to be poor than those who didn't get help from the Local Government Routine Social Assistance SSN program. The value of Exp (β) was 0.370. A significant value of less than 0.05 or 0.005 suggested that the existence of the

Regional Government's Routine Social Assistance SSN program affected the probability of someone being poor or not being poor in Tabalong Regency. Likewise, this estimation result indicated that the local government's SSN program for Routine Social Assistance was on track. This finding corroborated Wibowo et al.'s (2022) assertion that Indonesia's fiscal decentralization system significantly impacted poverty reduction.

Exp value (β) on the control variable, the number of household members was 2,060, which meant that households with more household members tend to be at risk of being poor by 2,060 times compared to households with fewer household members. This result was in line with Khairati & Syahni's (2020) and Libois & Somville's (2018) research that increasing the number of household members would increase the household's probability of becoming poor.

Exp (β) value on the control variable, gender of the primary household member, was 0.335. As a result, families with a female primary member were 0.335 times more likely to be poor than a household with a leading male member. Nisak & Sugiharti's (2020) research in Indonesia similarly concluded that the status of women as heads of households affects the level of poverty in a home.

The value of Exp (β) on the income of primary household members was 0.332, which meant that households with jobs in agriculture were 0.332 times more at risk of poverty than the member who works non-agriculturally (reference category). Employment status had a strong influence on a household's poverty condition because work was the largest source of income for the household. According to Imai et al. (2015), individuals who worked outside of agriculture were more likely than those in agriculture to escape poverty.

The *Hosmer and Lemeshow test* contingency table could explain the results of the measurement straightness between variables (association measurement) and the measurement of expectations from the data. Instead, when calculating the *Nagelkerke R-Square* value to determine how much of the variance in response variable Y could be explained by Xi's predictor variable. The test results obtained a value of 0.417. In addition to household size, gender, education, and occupation, the SSN variable also explained poverty as measured by the Regional Government's Village Fund Cash Assistance and Routine Social Assistance programs.

Table 5. Model of Contingency Test

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	275.790 ^a	0.301	0.417

Source: Logistic Regression Analyzed, 2022

Overall, one SSN program and control variable significantly affected the poverty variable in Tabalong Regency. This outcome followed the findings of previous studies, i.e., Ahmed et al. (2014); Javed et al. (2021); Naqvi et al. (2014); Suharto (2015); Babatunde & Olagunju (2020); Dewi & Andrianus (2021); Rizki (2021); Abdoul-Azize & El Gamil (2021); Esobi et al. (2021); Warner & Zhang (2021); and Varghese et al. (2021) which stated that social safety net programs were effective in reducing poverty.

Ivaschenko et al. (2018) stated that the social safety net program was an intervention program designed to help individuals and households overcome poverty and vulnerability. Referring to this theory, the SSN program provided by the government had a significant influence on poverty in Tabalong Regency. However, not all SSN programs had a

significant effect. Only the SSN program provided by the local government in the form of Direct Village Fund Cash Assistance and Routine Social Assistance from the Regional Government had a significant influence on poverty in Tabalong Regency. This result also corresponded to Slater (2011). The importance of SSN as an anti-poverty intervention provided by the government. The main goal of the Social Safety Net program was to reduce poverty. SSN has a protection function and a security function for vulnerable groups in helping to reduce the number of poor people.

The logistic regression model results in this study indicated that the social safety net program supplied by the local government had a more significant effect on reducing the probability of persons in Tabalong Regency becoming poor than the central government-funded social safety net program. This fact correlated with the effectiveness of Tabalong Regency's fiscal decentralization initiative. This effect occurred because fiscal decentralization brings local governments closer to the community and local government with more precise information about the community's needs, allowing for more effective poverty-reduction measures (Silas et al., 2018). One of the regions' poverty-reduction programs was the provision of the SSN program in the form of Routine Village Fund Assistance and Routine Social Assistance from the Regional Government.

Effective public administration contributes to the magnitude of the two SSN programs' influence in minimizing the probability of persons in the Tabalong Regency becoming destitute through targeted aid distribution. The data on poor households used to distribute aid from the local government of Tabalong Regency was relevant and appropriate, ensuring that the support offered successfully assists poor households in fulfilling their daily basic needs.

Alleviating poverty after the pandemic takes a long (Ibrahim, 2021). That's why the government needs strategies. One of them is the provision of an accurate database of poor households. The availability of empirical data on a macro level is critical for poverty reduction effectiveness. Transparent data is the crucial success of SSN distribution. Valid empirical data provide a solid foundation for developing a poverty reduction strategy. Effective governance in poverty alleviation is both a responsibility and a problem for government administrators charged with providing essential public services to all citizens.

IV. Conclusion

Simultaneous testing of the parameter estimation model concluded that the SSN program affects poverty conditions in Tabalong Regency. However, partial model testing concluded that not all SSN programs affect poverty in Tabalong Regency. Only programs from the local government, particularly the Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance and Routine Social Assistance programs, significantly affected poverty in Tabalong Regency. Furthermore, there was an impact of the control variables on how poor a household in Tabalong Regency was.

For further research, conduct a more in-depth study of one of the SSN programs sourced from the Central Government to find out what factors hinder the success of the SSN program sourced from the Central Government.

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