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Article

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Exploring BUMDES accountability: Balancing expectations and reality

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ABSTRACT

Village-owned enterprises (VOEs), known as BUMDES in Indonesia, are heralded as pivotal for rural community welfare. Yet, they contribute only 2% to 4% to village revenues, revealing a dependency on government support. This study examines the accountability practices of BUMDES through an Institutional Logic lens, highlighting a mismatch between government expectations of financial returns and BUMDES's broader performance evaluation across financial, operational, and societal domains. Utilising a multi-case study approach, the research uncovers the coexistence of dual logics within BUMDES: one favouring social welfare, the other commercial sustainability. It is noted that BUMDES utilises various control mechanisms such as meetings, dialogues, and community involvement in implementing their programmes. Mechanisms for reporting, disclosure, performance evaluation, and assessment are also in place, though self-regulatory mechanisms are notably absent. While financial accountability is confirmed, accountability in fairness and performance remains obscure. The study advocates for regulatory enhancements to clarify BUMDES objectives and align financial and social performance indicators. It also recommends developing a structured curriculum to boost the BUMDES administrators' capabilities. Additionally, linking the programmes to a compliance-based rating system could incentivise improvement and accountability.

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1. Introduction

Around the world, governments have embarked on various flagship programmes aimed at community upliftment, striving to enhance economic and social welfare. Notable examples include One Village One Product (OVOP) in Japan and Malawi, One *Tambon* One Product (OTOP) in Thailand, and One *Commune* One Product (OCOP) in Vietnam. Despite their diversity, these initiatives share a unifying objective: to foster community self-sufficiency and improve living standards. These programmes are not merely economic projects, they are comprehensive community development initiatives that blend cultural, social, and environmental considerations with economic objectives (Kurokawa et al., 2010; Denpaiboon & Amatasawatdee, 2012; Kemavuthanon, 2014; Mukai & Fujikura, 2015; Indramedhi, 2017; Kitipadung & Jaiborisudhi, 2021; Phan et al., 2021).

In the Indonesian context, *Badan Usaha Milik Desa* (BUMDES) have been established as a conduit for enhancing village welfare. However, these entities face significant hurdles, including minimal contributions to village income, reliance on government assistance, and regulatory ambiguities that foster opportunities for misconduct (Budiono, 2015; Anggraeni, 2016; Suara, 2017; Kurniasih et al., 2018; Swastawan et al., 2019; Sofyani et al., 2019; Kania et al., 2020; Solopos, 2020; Wartakita, 2020; Republika, 2021;

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Statistic Indonesia, 2023). These challenges underscore the complexity of achieving sustainable development and financial autonomy within village communities.

The performance expectations set by the Indonesian government for BUMDES focus primarily on financial metrics such as total income, total assets, and contributions to the village's original income. This financial-centric perspective contrasts with the broader, multifaceted approach adopted by BUMDES administrators, which includes considerations of societal well-being and village sustainability alongside financial health (Kemendesa.go.id, 2016; Darwita & Redana, 2018; Kirowati & Setia, 2018; Antaranews.com, 2019; Manadoonline.com, 2019; its.ac.id, 2020; Masterplandes.com, 2020, 2022; Sudrajat et al., 2021; Liputan6.com, 2021; DPMDKaltimprov.go.id, 2022; Hayati & Aji, 2022; Nganjukkab.go.id, 2022; Tribunnews.com, 2022). This divergence in performance evaluation criteria leads to potential misalignments in the operational and strategic objectives of BUMDES initiatives.

Regulatory frameworks and policies governing BUMDES, including Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021, Law Number 6 of 2014 on Village, and the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Number 6 of 2020, have been critiqued for their lack of clear performance measures. This ambiguity impacts the accountability mechanisms and the performance reporting practices of BUMDES, rendering the evaluation of these enterprises inconclusive and debatable (Anggraeni, 2016 Kurniasih et al., 2018; Mahmudah, 2018; Widiastuti et al., 2019; Ana & Ga, 2021; Wahyuni & Ismail, 2021).

In addressing the observed deficiencies within the prevailing body of research, which primarily concentrates on the pragmatic aspects of village empowerment initiatives without furnishing a theoretical basis to comprehend their inception, progression, and the challenges they face, this investigation aspires to bridge this gap. Through the lens of Institutional Logic theory, as delineated by Friedland and Alford (1991), this study seeks to elucidate:

1. The embodiment of material practices within the accountability mechanisms of BUMDES; and
2. The diverse logic employed by BUMDES in the execution of accountability, alongside the overarching logic underpinning these practices.

Consequently, the current paper seeks to make the following contributions to the existing literature. Firstly, through the adoption of Institutional Logic theory as delineated by Friedland and Alford (1991), and subsequently expanded upon by Thornton and Ocasio (2008) and (Lepoutre & Valente, 2012), this investigation enriches discourse surrounding village empowerment initiatives. It provides a theoretical framework to decipher the complexity inherent in the accountability mechanisms employed by BUMDES, thereby addressing a significant void in literature that predominantly accentuates pragmatic considerations over theoretical underpinnings essential for elucidating BUMDES's accountability logic.

Secondly, by elucidating the diverse logics that inform BUMDES's accountability practices, this work underscores the necessity for a revised approach towards evaluating and comprehending the efficacy of village empowerment programmes. This facet of the study emphasises the importance of recognising the multiplicity of underlying logic to fully grasp the operational dynamics of such initiatives.

Methodologically, the study's employment of thematic and constant comparative analyses introduces a nuanced and comprehensive examination of BUMDES operations. This distinctive approach facilitates the inclusion of cases representing various developmental stages and business sectors within the BUMDES framework, offering a more encompassing understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Furthermore, the application of thematic and constant comparative analyses extend the research's contribution by facilitating an intricate exploration of material practices and symbolic constructions within BUMDES. This methodology not only augments the analytical framework but also serves as a referential blueprint for future research within analogous contexts.

Practically, the findings of this study bear significant implications by generating critical policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the accountability of BUMDES and akin initiatives. Predicated on the identification of accountability types, their intended recipients, and the mechanisms thereof, alongside an appreciation for the institutional logics that underpin and shape these activities, these recommendations hold substantial value for policymakers and BUMDES administrators alike. This practical contribution

is instrumental in aligning performance expectations with the operational realities, thereby optimising the effectiveness of village empowerment programmes.

2. Background

The initiative of BUMDES in Indonesia, while intended to boost village prosperity through local resource utilization, has encountered significant challenges in execution. A key issue is the heavy reliance on government funding, with villages generating only 2% to 4% of their revenue independently, and up to 88% coming from various government allocations as reported by Statistic Indonesia (2023). This dependency poses risks to the long-term viability of BUMDES, especially if national development priorities shift away from rural funding (Sofyani et al., 2019). This situation is not unique to Indonesia. Similar rural empowerment models in countries like Thailand, Vietnam, and Malawi, namely OTOP, OCOP, and OVOP, respectively, exhibit analogous challenges, chiefly a pronounced dependency on governmental support (Kurokawa et al., 2010; Natsuda, Natsuda et al., 2012; Anh, 2013; Mukai & Fujikura, 2015; Kitipadung & Jaiborisudhi, 2021; Phan et al., 2021). Such findings underscore the importance of mitigating government reliance to ensure the long-term viability of these programmes.

A potential contributor to these challenges is the limited innovation within these programs. Like MSMEs in developing countries, BUMDES and similar initiatives face obstacles such as resource constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient technological capabilities. These limitations hinder their progress and maintain their reliance on external support. While innovation is essential for fostering self-sufficiency and boosting income generation, without focused efforts to enhance technological innovation, these programs may continue to struggle with long-term viability issues.

In developed countries like Germany, the integration of digitalisation and robust government support has empowered MSMEs to adopt cutting-edge technologies, significantly enhancing their innovation capabilities while reducing reliance on external assistance (Radicic & Petković, 2023). Similarly, in Spain, a strong focus on process innovation and government subsidies for research and development has driven consistent improvements in productivity and efficiency within MSMEs (Sánchez-Sellero et al., 2015). Technological advancements in these developed nations fuel innovation, fostering growth and competitiveness.

In contrast, MSMEs in developing nations face more significant challenges in leveraging innovation for technological progress. In Thailand, Chantanaphant et al. (2013) observed that while MSMEs with strong technological capabilities driven by innovation tend to perform better in export markets, many face difficulties in accessing the resources and knowledge required for effective innovation. Similarly, in Malaysia, the impact of innovation on technological progress is moderate, with product innovation being more prominent than process or market innovation (Rosli & Sidek, 2013). Nonetheless, the overall pace of technological advancement remains slower than in developed countries, primarily due to resource constraints and a limited focus on research and development activities (Jajri & Ismail, 2009). Indonesia experiences comparable challenges, as Hamdani and Wirawan (2012) suggest that small businesses often operate in highly competitive environments but lack access to crucial technology and capital. Although open innovation through collaboration with external partners is recommended, Indrawati et al. (2020) highlight that its implementation is impeded by insufficient government support, a shortage of skilled labour, and inadequate funding.

These limitations restrict technological advancement, making it difficult for small businesses and initiatives like BUMDES and similar programmes to achieve the same level of innovation as seen in developed nations. Consequently, these programs often remain dependent on government support, underscoring the urgent need for policies that promote technological progress and innovation to foster self-sufficiency and long-term viability.

The challenges facing BUMDES and similar initiatives in developing countries are not solely rooted in technological and resource limitations. Another significant issue arises from the misalignment between government expectations and the criteria used by BUMDES to evaluate their success. This divergence in perspectives further complicates the efforts to enhance the long-term operational and effectiveness of these programs.

Government primarily evaluates BUMDES entities based on financial metrics such as income generation, asset growth, and contributions to village revenues—a perspective corroborated by sources like Antaranews.com (2019); Ministry of Village (2021), DPMDKaltimprov.go.id (2022). In contrast, BUMDES' assessment of its success extends beyond financial achievements to encompass its impact on social welfare. This includes the creation of employment opportunities, provision of salaries to villagers, implementation of subsidies, support for impoverished residents, and contributions to environmental sustainability and cleanliness. This broader approach to evaluating success, highlighted by researchers such as Prasetyo (2017), Darwita and Redana (2018), Kirowati and Setia (2018), and Hayati and Aji (2022) underscores a complex layer of expectations and evaluations that define the operational landscape of BUMDES in Indonesia.

The Minister of Village Regulation No. 3 of 2021 mandates that BUMDES should report detailing accountability across a variety of facets, including management, oversight, financial dealings, business development outcomes, collaborations, and human resource management, as well as encountered challenges, opportunities, and strategic business plans. Nonetheless, how BUMDES execute this reporting requirement varies significantly in practice. Certain BUMDES limit their reporting to purely financial outcomes, concentrating exclusively on monetary performance (Wahyuni & Ismail, 2021), while others provide a more comprehensive account that includes both financial results and operational (output) performance (Anggraeni, 2016; Widiastuti et al., 2019). It is important to note that such reporting predominantly addresses vertical accountability to the village and sub-district governmental levels, with accountability towards the community often being neglected (Kurniasih et al., 2018). This results in a general insufficiency in the overall accountability of BUMDES. The absence of explicit and stringent repercussions for failing to meet accountability standards further aggravates the issue, paving the way for potential misuse and fraudulent activities within BUMDES.

Recent studies have identified numerous challenges associated with BUMDES accountability. These challenges encompass issues such as the lack of transparency in the financial and operational reporting of BUMDES to the local community (Anggraeni, 2016), insufficient support and collaboration from village authorities (Kania et al., 2020), and the presence of conflicts of interest alongside the Village Head's predominant influence in BUMDES operations (Budiono, 2015; Kurniasih et al., 2018). Frequently, the Village Head occupies several roles simultaneously, serving not only as the leader of the village's administrative government but also as an advisor to BUMDES and a member of the village council. This multiplicity of roles can result in a concentration of power, thereby reducing the effectiveness of checks and balances within the system.

Additionally, instances of corruption involving BUMDES funds have been reported, implicating Village Heads and BUMDES management in fraudulent practices (Detakkaltim, 2017; Detikcom, 2021; Gatra, 2021; Kabardaerah, 2019; Kejarilabuanbatu, 2021). Such malfeasances not only compromise the operational efficacy of BUMDES but also divert benefits towards particular individuals or factions, thereby detracting from the collective welfare of rural communities. These actions stand in stark contrast to the foundational objectives of the BUMDES programme, which seeks to foster community empowerment and enhance the quality of life in rural settings. It is imperative to address these issues to guarantee the effective realisation and triumph of the BUMDES initiative.

Despite existing research highlighting a myriad of challenges within the accountability practices of BUMDES, there is a discernible lack of theoretical discourse examining these issues. A theoretical exploration of these challenges enables researchers to more precisely identify root causes and seek effective solutions for enhancing BUMDES accountability. Motivated by this gap, the current study aims to delve into the variability of BUMDES accountability practices through a theoretical perspective, employing the Institutional Logic framework as suggested by Friedland and Alford (1991). This study suggests that the varied accountability practices among different BUMDES reflect the unique cognitive and organisational paradigms embraced by the individuals and institutions involved with BUMDES, which may either be in conflict or in alignment with one another. The strategic choices related to accountability reporting by BUMDES are shaped by the overarching institutional logic that directs their operations. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate these variances in accountability practices through the Institutional Logic theory lens, intending to formulate a framework that not only improves the performance and accountability of BUMDES but also significantly boosts their contribution to community welfare.

3. Theoretical literature review

In the realm of organisational studies, Institutional Theory emerges as a pivotal framework for dissecting the multifaceted dimensions of organisational behaviour. It sheds light on how organisations navigate the complex interplay of internal and external environmental factors, underscoring the influence of societal norms and values on decision-making processes. This theory elucidates the propensity of individuals and organisations to diverge from pure economic rationality, attributing such deviations to the pervasive impact of societal expectations and norms that organisations are compelled to observe.

The evolution of Institutional Theory into "old" and "new" institutionalisms marks a significant scholarly endeavour to refine our understanding of organisational dynamics. Selznick (1949, 1952, 1957, 1996), a seminal figure in this field, introduced the concept of institutionalisation, positing that organisations cultivate their unique identity and competencies in response to external challenges. He emphasised that an organisation's capacity to institutionalise—embedding specific values, habits, and routines within its structure—is contingent upon its strategic orientations (Selznick, 1996). This perspective advocates for the integration of new concepts or ideas into an organisation's core values and practices as a pathway to successful institutionalisation (Oliver, 1997). In contrast, the "old" institutionalisation perspective regards institutionalized norms, values, and assumptions as unquestionable and already ingrained in organisational thinking (Guerreiro et al., 2006). This viewpoint has limitations in explaining institutional changes that play a role in altering accountability and performance practices.

"New" institutionalism posits the quest for legitimacy as the principal catalyst for organisational transformation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This theoretical framework accentuates the construction of symbolic meanings and structures, positing that entities adapt to dominant practices and norms to avert normative sanctions. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the process of institutionalisation unfolds through isomorphism, driven by coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures, compelling organisations within a specific domain to evolve towards uniformity in structures and practices. Such institutional pressures are exerted across various entities, aiming to secure legitimacy within the organisational order or to enhance operational efficiency. For instance, the normative impetus of environmental management accounting (EMA) decisively prompts manufacturing SMEs in Yemen to adopt EMA methodologies, to ameliorate their environmental and, consequently, financial performance (Hasan et al., 2024). Normative pressure emanating from robust governance and CSR practices beneficially impacts corporate financial outcomes (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013). Similarly, institutional pressures stemming from legal, cultural, and normative dimensions upon firms listed on the Dhaka Stock Exchange have spurred enhancements in CSR reporting practices (Jahid et al., 2023).

However, these scholars recognise the variation in organisational structures and practices in the initial phases of an institution's lifecycle, indicating a sophisticated interplay between pressures for conformity and organisational uniqueness. As the institutional framework matures and becomes more precisely defined, organisations experience escalating pressures to conform, leading to a greater alignment among them. In this context, "new" institutionalism may exhibit certain limitations in offering a comprehensive explanation for the observed disparities in BUMDES accountability practices. While it underscores the propensity of organisations to adapt and standardise within an institutional context, this theory may not entirely account for the varied approaches embraced by BUMDES entities. The unique circumstances and dynamics within the BUMDES sphere, encompassing local context, community values, and specific organisational factors, significantly contribute to the noted differences in their accountability practices.

The dialogue on Institutional Theory further advances with the critiques of "new" institutionalism by Friedland and Alford (1991) and its subsequent expansion by Thornton and Ocasio (2008). They argue for an understanding of institutionalisation that encompasses the development and enactment of patterns based on symbolic constructions, which are influenced by individuals' and organisations' meaningful experiences. Lepoutre and Valente (2012) provide an in-depth exploration of these symbolic constructions, including regulations, norms, and belief systems, which collectively form the Institutional Logic guiding the actions of entities within a specific field. Meanwhile, material practices include routines, inter-system relationships, and artefacts that are generated and preserved by individuals and organisations within the institutional framework.

Since institutional orders provide sources of logics for organisations in the field, the multiple logics used in BUMDES accountability practices are influenced by institutional orders operating in the BUMDES field. At the societal level, the institutional orders that limit the means and outputs of individual, organisational, and societal behaviours are the market, state bureaucracies, family, democracy, religion, community, profession, and corporation (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), which are also sources of logic for agency and transformation in individuals, organisations, and society.

Numerous organisations embody diverse logics within their structures and methodologies, aimed at navigating the complex demands of their milieu (Kraatz & Block, 2008; Greenwood et al., 2011; Besharov & Smith, 2014). Scholars have identified these multifarious logics as either competing or offering conflicting alternatives (Zilber, 2002; Battilana & Dorado, 2010).

During the process of institutionalisation, the array of multiple logics encountered can lead to several outcomes regarding how these logics interact and influence organisational and field-level dynamics. As outlined in scholarly work by Haveman and Rao (1997); Strang and Meyer (1993); Lounsbury (2002); and Greenwood and Suddaby (2006), one possible outcome is the emergence of a dominant logic that overshadows other existing logics, shaping the predominant way of thinking and operating within an organisation or field.

Alternatively, as suggested by Purdy and Gray (2009), McPherson and Sauder (2013), Siti-Nabiha et al. (2018) and Nguyen, V. D., Nguyen, T. T. M., & Nguyen, Q. H. (2023), these multiple logics may coexist, each retaining its influence without one overriding the others. This scenario leads to a landscape where varied logics interplay and co-determine the practices and norms of the institutional field, allowing for a diverse set of principles to guide organisational behaviour and decision-making.

Furthermore, as proposed by Binder (2007) and Battilana and Dorado (2010), a blending of logics can occur, resulting in the formation of a new identity. In this context, elements from different logics combine to create a novel logic that incorporates aspects of the original ones, yet distinguishes itself as a unique guiding principle. This synthesis can lead to innovative approaches to organisational structure, strategy, and practices, reflecting the complexity and dynamism of institutional fields. These pathways highlight the fluidity and evolving nature of institutional logics, illustrating how they can adapt, intersect, and transform within the institutionalization process to influence organisational identities and practices.

This study employed an Institutional Logic approach as the overarching theoretical framework in explaining the reasons behind the diversity observed in BUMDES accountability practices. This approach is adept at unveiling the multiple logics that emerge during the creation of symbolic constructions which further function as the cognitive framework that guides the actions of individuals and organisations in the BUMDES field, as they translate their accountability principles into established routines, inter-system relationships, and other observable artefacts.

The process of accountability practices can be elucidated through four fundamental elements as proposed by Joannides (2012), namely: (1) identifying the accountable party; (2) specifying the subject of accountability; (3) determining the recipient of the accountability; and (4) outlining the method or approach employed to fulfil the accountability. As stipulated in the regulations, each BUMDES must annually report its programmes and performance, making it accountable. Thus, in examining BUMDES accountability practices, this study focuses on what is accountable, to whom, and how.

Behn (2001) argued that accountability actors must be responsible for three (3) essential aspects: *finance*, *fairness*, and *performance*. *Accountability for finances* is required to assess whether an organisation has used the resources entrusted to it wisely. Auditing mechanisms are carried out to check whether the organisation complies with existing rules, standards, and procedures. Meanwhile, *accountability for fairness* aims to show that the norms and other applicable provisions have been implemented fairly, whereas *accountability for performance* accounts for the actual achievements of the accountability actors (Behn, 2001). In other words, the finances and fairness accountability practices demonstrate the way the actors perform their accountability, whereas performance accountability reveals the results of this accountability. While performance results in outputs in the short term, it is exposed to the impacts of accountability practices in the long run.

Accountability forums can be classified according to their hierarchy which indicates the level of pressure exerted by stakeholders. Ebrahim (2003) defined accountability forums as upward, downward,

and internal accountability to fulfil the missions and visions of the organisation. O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) argued that organisations must prioritise accountability to those capable of directly influencing the achievement of the organisation's objectives. This refers to upward hierarchical accountability to which the organisation should be held accountable. However, O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) admitted that the decisions made by the organisation also have an impact on other stakeholders. Therefore, O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) defined holistic accountability as broad accountability towards other individuals, other organisations, and/or the environment affected by the actions taken by the organisation.

As accountability actors must determine the priorities of the forums to which they must be responsible, this study positions accountability forums in terms of their hierarchy as described by O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) and identifies accountability forums that can affect the sustainability of the organisation as well as those that are directly affected by the decisions (or non-decisional actions) made by the organisation. This is important because different forums can influence accountability practices.

Accountability mechanisms, which blend intangible processes and tangible tools, are crucial for organisational transparency and are categorised by Ebrahim (2003) into five types: reports and disclosure statements, performance assessments, participation, self-regulation, and social audits. These mechanisms are designed to evaluate both immediate and long-term achievements, encourage stakeholder engagement through various forms of participation, and ensure ethical standards through self-regulation and social audits.

Ntim et al. (2017) add that the effectiveness of these accountability mechanisms also relies on the quality of the audit committee, the diversity of the governing board, and their level of independence. They suggest a shared leadership model to ensure a more inclusive decision-making process, emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives in the reporting and disclosure of organisational activities and outcomes.

The existing corpus of research on rural empowerment extensively examines the implementation details of various initiatives across different countries, alongside the challenges encountered. These studies particularly underscore sustainability issues in government-led rural empowerment programmes in Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, and Malawi (Kurokawa, 2009; Kurokawa et al., 2010; Natsuda et al., 2012; Anh, 2013; Mukai & Fujikura, 2015; Kitipadung & Jaiborisudhi, 2021; Phan et al., 2021), identifying a common dilemma: a significant overreliance on government support crucial for their success. This dependency raises questions about the long-term viability and accountability of these programmes, scrutinising how such initiatives sustain their efforts and results when external support wanes.

In the context of BUMDES in Indonesia, research has predominantly focused on their growth and the positive repercussions on employment and village income, whilst tackling the barriers encountered in their evolution (Budiono, 2015; Anggraeni, 2016; Yunita & Christianingrum, 2018; Pradnyani, 2019; Kania et al., 2020). However, a theoretical void persists in thoroughly analysing the forces propelling development, progress, and the myriad challenges of these rural empowerment initiatives, especially from an accountability perspective.

This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the nuances of BUMDES accountability practices, utilising the Institutional Logic theory as propounded by Friedland and Alford (1991) and expanded upon by Thornton and Ocasio (2008), with further refinements by Lepoutre and Valente (2012). These theoretical frameworks highlight the variegated logics encapsulated in symbolic constructs, thereby informing the cognitive frameworks that direct the actions of individuals and organisations in the BUMDES domain as they navigate through the intricacies of accountability. The conceptualisation of accountability in this analysis is informed by Behn's (2001) examination of what aspects demand accountability, O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) identification of the accountability recipients, and Ebrahim's (2003) articulation of the mechanisms through which accountability is operationalised in rural empowerment initiatives. Figure 1 outlines the theoretical framework of this investigation, integrating concepts from Institutional Logic and Accountability theories to frame the research objectives. This framework serves as a scaffold, elucidating how Institutional Logic influence BUMDES organisations' approaches to accountability, and in turn, how these approaches underpin the execution of BUMDES programmes with the aim of community welfare improvement and poverty alleviation.

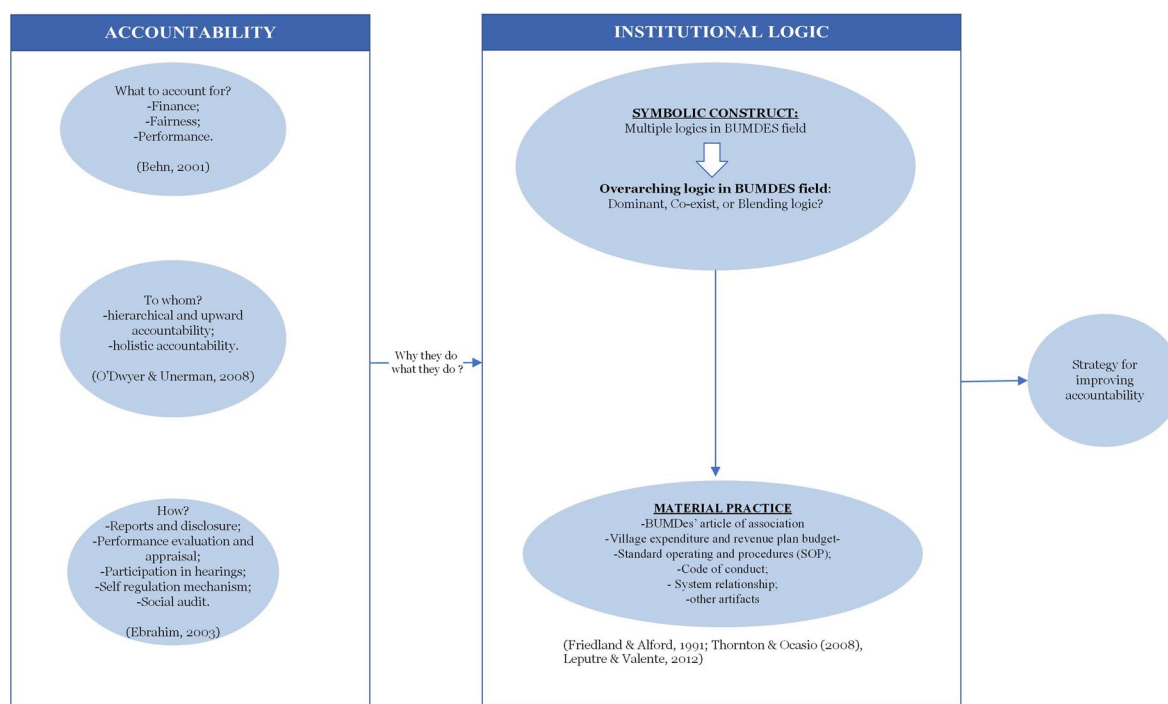


Figure 1. Research framework.

Source: Authors' work.

4. Research design

4.1. Research setting

This investigation endeavours to offer a holistic view of understanding the multiple logics employed by individual and organisational actors in the BUMDES field on accountability practices. How accountability is practised within BUMDES is shaped by the cognitive processes and awareness of these actors, which contribute to the formation of a subjective reality. Drawing upon the theoretical framework posited by Hopper and Powell (1985), it is argued that reality is constructed through individual cognition or consciousness, wherein the external social world is interpreted through labels or concepts devised by individuals. These constructs are employed not only to comprehend reality but also to facilitate mutual understanding among individuals. Consequently, this study operates under the ontological assumption that the perception of accountability within BUMDES is inherently subjective, stemming from the cognition and consciousness of the actors involved.

From an epistemological standpoint, the study deeply recognises that the understanding of various logics driving BUMDES accountability practices depends on the interactions between individual and institutional actors within the BUMDES context. Accordingly, this research adopts an interpretive approach, as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Golfashani (2003), and Maxwell (2012). Given that the ontological assumption of this study is subjective, and the epistemological underpinning of this study is contingent upon individual experiences and insights, this research was conducted using a qualitative method.

The qualitative exploration was initiated under the directive of Universitas Indonesia, as specified in the Internationally Indexed Leading Publication Grant 2022. Before initiating data gathering, the necessary authorisation was obtained from the Research Directorate of Universitas Indonesia via the PUTI Q2 Grant, reference number NKB-534/UN2.RST/HKP.05.00/2022, to ensure adherence to ethical standards in research.

This comprehensive multi-case study was undertaken across three provinces in Indonesia: West Java, the Special Administrative Region of Yogyakarta, and West Nusa Tenggara. A qualitative methodology was adopted to delve into the motivations, reasons, behaviours, and the broader context of beliefs and actions, in line with Myers (2013). The decision to utilise a qualitative framework was driven by the study's objective to critically investigate the influence of symbolic constructions on both individuals and

institutional actors within the BUMDES domain, particularly their accountability practices. This methodological approach was considered apt for acquiring a profound understanding of the investigated phenomena through direct engagement between the researchers and the participants involved.

A framework of criteria was devised to encapsulate varied perspectives within the cases; it was imperative that the selected Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) encapsulate (1) distinct stages of development and (2) diverse business orientations (commercial and/or social). This stratification across development levels and business orientations is instrumental in delineating the array of logical perspectives employed by actors across different BUMDES categories, thereby influencing their institutional logic formation. This investigation classified the development stages of BUMDES following the five stages of the business lifecycle as articulated by Hallbom (2003) and Wang (2002): (1) pioneer, (2) developing, (3) advanced, (4) decline, and (5) rebirth. This classification mirrors the ranking system employed by the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration for BUMDES evaluation. Given the lack of public access to the specific criteria and methodologies utilised by the Ministry for BUMDES assessment, the business lifecycle framework proposed by Hallbom (2003) and Wang (2002) served as a foundational tool for gauging the developmental stages of the BUMDES under scrutiny in this study.

For this multi-case study, ten BUMDES were meticulously selected across three provinces: West Nusa Tenggara, represented by three units of analysis; West Java, encompassing four units of analysis; and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, containing four units of analysis. These organisations span a broad spectrum of business orientations, with some predominantly focusing on commercial endeavours, while others are guided by socially oriented objectives. Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the case organisations involved in this study.

In the province of West Nusa Tenggara, three Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) from East Lombok, Central Lombok, and North Lombok Regencies were selected for inclusion in this study. East Lombok and Central Lombok are the most and second-most densely populated regencies in the province, with populations of approximately 1.366 million and 1.068 million respectively. North Lombok, with a population of around 256.4 thousand, ranks as the seventh most populous out of ten cities/regencies in West Nusa Tenggara. Regarding poverty rates, East and Central Lombok hold the first and second positions

Table 1. Profile of the case organisations.

No	Name	Village	Province	Field of Business	Business Orientation	2022 Village Development Index	Stage of Business
1	BUMDES KK	NTB1 Village	West Nusa Tenggara	Sharia-based microfinance; homestay; tourist attractions for coffee and coconut oil making; tour guides	Commercial-oriented	Developed Village	Advanced
2	BUMDES MS	NTB2 Village	West Nusa Tenggara	Microfinance loans	Commercial-oriented	Developing Village	Declined
3	BUMDES PB	NTB3 Village	West Nusa Tenggara	Rental of homestays, swimming pool, and tourism village	Commercial-oriented	Independent Village	Rebirth
4	BUMDES TA	JBR1 Village	West Java	Natural hot spring	Commercial-oriented	Independent Village	Advanced
5	BUMDES KP	JBR2 Village	West Java	Multi-payment service	Commercial-oriented	Developed Village	Developing
6	BUMDES KM	JBR3 Village	West Java	WIFI rental; multi-payment service	Commercial-oriented	Developed Village	Developing
7	BUMDES SR	DIY1 Village	Special Region of Yogyakarta	Trading; tourism village; sheep breeding	Commercial-oriented	Independent Village	Pioneer
8	BUMDES TM	DIY2 Village	Special Region of Yogyakarta	WIFI rental; waste collector service	Commercial and social-oriented	Independent Village	Rebirth
9	BUMDES AP	DIY3 Village	Special Region of Yogyakarta	Waste processing facility; rental of culinary stalls, swimming pool; futsal court; and rice milling service	Commercial and social-oriented	Independent Village	Advanced
10	BUMDES PL	DIY4 Village	Special Region of Yogyakarta	Waste processing facility; restaurant; meeting hall; and village markets	Commercial and social-oriented	Independent Village	Advanced

Source: Authors' work.

respectively, while North Lombok is positioned sixth in terms of poverty rates within the province, as per the 2023 Statistics of West Nusa Tenggara Province.

In West Java Province, the study concentrated on three BUMDES located in Bogor Regency. This area is notable for having the highest population density (5.556 million people), the largest impoverished population (491.24 thousand people), and the greatest number of villages (435) in the province, according to Statistics West Java Province (2023).

For the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, four BUMDES from Sleman and Bantul Regencies were chosen, these being the two most densely populated areas in the province with populations of 1.148 million and 1.013 million in 2022, respectively, as reported by the Statistics Special Region of Yogyakarta Province (2023). In the same year, Bantul Regency reported the highest poverty figures in the province, with 130.13 thousand individuals living in poverty, while Sleman Regency ranked third with 98.92 thousand people below the poverty line.

4.2. Data collection

Access to the case organisations and participants for this study was facilitated through snowball or chain-referral sampling techniques as guided by Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) Noy (2008), Naderifar et al. (2017). This method capitalises on the networks and connections within a particular community or field. It commences with the researchers making initial contact with key individuals—such as regional bureaucrats involved in village empowerment, academics, and community development activists—who are well-informed about the target BUMDES organisations. Following these initial interactions, the researchers may request these contacts to recommend other relevant entities or individuals who align with the study's selection criteria. This approach facilitates the discovery of potential participants and organisations for case studies, which might otherwise remain inaccessible through conventional methods. The procedure is iterative, with each new contact potentially leading the researchers to additional suitable participants, thereby progressively broadening the network and enhancing access to appropriate case study entities.

Accessing the desired case study organisations entailed a methodical use of personal and institutional networks to initiate contacts both within and beyond the Java Island region. Through these networks, the researchers established connections with key figures such as community development activists in West Nusa Tenggara Province, a rural research institute in the Yogyakarta Special District Province, and the Rural Community Empowerment Service in Bogor Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia.

Once access was granted to the relevant BUMDES organisations, the researchers adhered to ethical norms and protocols by formally requesting permission to conduct field studies in the villages where these BUMDES operated. This process began with contacting the Village Head to obtain approval for conducting research within their jurisdiction.

As a qualitative investigation, this study adheres to the approach delineated by Cresswell (1998), which emphasises the process of exploring social or human problems through a method that produces a complex and holistic picture. This involves the analysis of language, reports of detailed views conveyed by informants, and conducting research within natural settings. Complementing this approach, Jacob (1988) notes that qualitative research typically gathers data through open-ended questions, yielding direct quotations that form the core data. Jacob (1988) further asserts that the interviewer is an integral part of the research process. Consequently, the data derived from this study are predominantly textual (narrative) in nature, sourced primarily from quotations provided by informants. These textual elements form the core dataset of the research, offering rich, qualitative insights into the phenomena under study.

However, the reliance on textual evidence from interviews can introduce bias. To mitigate this risk and enhance validity, Yin (2018) recommends employing multiple sources of evidence to test the concepts under investigation. This method, known as triangulation, aims to bolster objectivity in the findings by ensuring they accurately represent the informants' perspectives and the research queries, rather than reflecting the researcher's biased interpretations or preconceptions (Carter et al., 2014). Consequently, this study also incorporates the analysis of pertinent documents and direct observations alongside interview quotations to substantiate the findings.

Besides triangulation, this study enhances its validity through the generalisation of the theory. Scapens (2004) and Yin (2018) articulate that in qualitative research, external validity is achieved by aligning observed empirical patterns with the theoretical constructs under examination. Consequently, theoretical generalisation in this study involves the systematic testing of patterns derived from the findings against the Institutional Logic framework proposed by Friedland and Alford (1991). Moreover, the concept of Accountability as delineated by Behn (2001), Ebrahim (2003), and O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) is also scrutinized. This methodological approach ensures that the theoretical implications of the study are robust and that they effectively resonate with established academic theories, thereby bolstering the study's validity.

In adherence to research ethics, the researchers took meticulous steps to ensure that all study participants were fully informed and provided consent. Each participant received a consent form, which emphasised the voluntary nature of their involvement, assured the confidentiality of their identities, and guaranteed the privacy of any documents and information gathered during the field study. To ensure comprehension, the form was made available in both English and Bahasa Indonesia. The consent form is included in [Appendix 1](#).

Following the approval and signing of the consent forms, the researchers organised interviews, scheduling them at locations convenient and comfortable for the participants. Throughout the research process, the signed forms were securely stored, preserving the confidentiality and integrity of the participants' information.

During the field studies, the researchers secured the necessary permissions to access several key locations, including the Village Office, the BUMDES office, their retail outlets, and workshops or businesses in the village supported by BUMDES. The purpose of these visits was to observe and assess the organisational structure of BUMDES, their work facilities, business processes, services, products, and the interactions between BUMDES management and stakeholders such as village officials, supervisors, advisers, and villagers.

Observational methods were pivotal in validating the information provided by interviewees, especially concerning BUMDES transparency and accountability. The researchers conducted thorough observations of bulletin boards, distributed flyers, and content on various social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups affiliated with BUMDES or the Village government, as well as websites managed by these entities. These observations were crucial for evaluating the transparency practices and methods of information dissemination utilised by BUMDES.

Furthermore, the researchers were permitted access to important documents like BUMDES annual reports, financial statements, and village regulations pertinent to BUMDES, from all participating entities. However, the right to retain copies of these documents was granted by only half of the BUMDES organisations involved, due to reasons specified by each BUMDES administrator respectively.

The study aimed to engage a diverse group of participants, including (1) village heads, (2) members of the Village Consultative Body (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa* or BPD), (3) BUMDES administrators, (4) regional government officials from the Regency Offices and Village Development & Empowerment Services at both regency and provincial levels, and (5) ordinary villagers. A total of 48 participants consented to take part in this research. [Figure 2](#) presents the demographic profiles of the participants.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were held face-to-face from July to September 2022. Participants were interviewed for durations ranging from 30 to 90 minutes at various locations, including the village office, BUMDES office, or the residences of the villagers. An interview protocol was developed to serve as a guide for interviewing each group of participants, ensuring that the interviews aligned with the research objectives (refer to [Appendix 2](#)). Each group of participants received the same set of questions, designed to verify and compare the responses across different groups.

The saturation point was reached after discussions with 48 participants, indicating that no additional themes emerged from these engagements. In West Nusa Tenggara Province, the assistance of an interpreter was enlisted for communication with several villagers in the Sasak dialect, facilitating the translation of responses into Indonesian. Whereas in Central Java and West Java Provinces, the researchers utilised their proficiency in the Javanese and Sundanese dialects, rendering translation services unnecessary. The interviews were initially transcribed in Indonesian before being translated into English, with subsequent verification against the Indonesian version to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the translations.

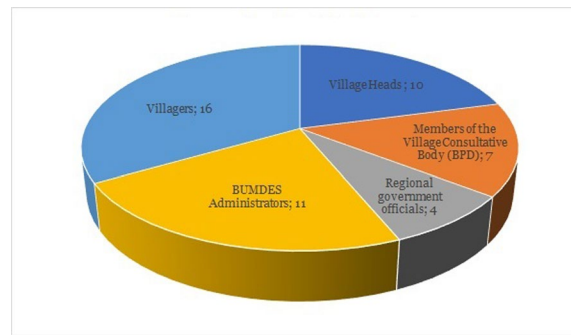


Figure 2. Profile of participants.
Source: Authors' analysis.

4.3. Data analysis

The textual (narrative) data harvested from the study were meticulously analysed employing both thematic and constant comparative analyses methods. Thematic analysis serves as a pivotal approach for parsing qualitative data, entailing a meticulous procedure of processing, coding, and summarizing the information extracted from the data corpus. This method aids in unveiling recurrent themes and patterns within the data, as highlighted by Sandelowski (2000). Concurrently, constant comparative analysis, as elucidated by Thorne (2000), was adopted to deepen the analytical process. This involved comparing data segments—ranging from interview excerpts to thematic expressions—across different participants. Such a comparative approach is instrumental in developing conceptual frameworks and probing the potential interrelations among various data segments.

The analysis of the data findings from the interviews was rigorously validated by reviewing relevant supporting documents and conducting direct observations in the field. This methodology is employed to prevent the introduction of undue objectivity and to ensure a balanced and nuanced interpretation of the findings.

For the initial identification of themes, NVivo 12 Pro software was harnessed as a tool to facilitate the analytical process. However, the subsequent interpretation and in-depth exploration of data were anchored in the authors' ingenuity in critically engaging with the data. This entailed a reflective process where the authors, drawing on their analytical acumen, endeavoured to uncover deeper insights within the data.

To mitigate potential biases and ensure the integrity of the analytical outcomes, a rigorous process of independent review was adopted. Each author undertook the task of independently reinterpreting and recoding the emergent themes, thereafter collaboratively confirming the results of this exercise. This collaborative validation process culminated in a consensus on the final themes and codes, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the analysis.

Furthermore, external validity in this study was achieved by systematically testing the findings against the institutional logic framework proposed by Friedland and Alford (1991) and the concept of accountability as outlined by Behn (2001), Ebrahim (2003), O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008). This process involved aligning the emergent patterns from the data with these established theoretical frameworks, thereby ensuring that the interpretations and conclusions drawn were directly relevant and contributive towards addressing the research objectives of this study.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Material practices in BUMDES accountability

The BUMDES institution is characterised by a complex network of organisational actors that synergistically contribute to its establishment and operational efficacy. This network encompasses a diverse array of entities, including BUMDES administrators, the Village Government, the Village Consultative Body, Regional Governments through District and Provincial Offices, the Central Government as represented by

the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, as well as the broader village communities. Within this structure, BUMDES administrators hold a pivotal role, bearing the responsibility for discharging accountability towards their beneficiary stakeholders. These stakeholders primarily comprise the Village Government, the Village Consultative Body, the village communities, as well as the governing bodies at both regional and national levels. Figure 3 illustrates the key organisational actors in the BUMDES institution.

Together, these actors fulfil distinct yet complementary roles within the BUMDES framework, collaboratively engaging across various governance layers. Their collective efforts span from the localised village context to the broader national spectrum, aiming to regulate, support, and actively participate in the facilitation and advancement of BUMDES initiatives. This integrated approach not only ensures the seamless functioning of BUMDES but also reinforces the institution's accountability and responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of its constituent communities.

The dynamics among organisational actors within the BUMDES sector generate a plethora of rationales that significantly impact the implementation of BUMDES programmes. Moreover, the prevailing institutional framework is recognised as a guiding architecture that both moulds and restricts the behaviour of these participants. This framework delineates the boundaries within which these actors operate, influencing their decisions and actions in the context of BUMDES initiatives. The interplay between the inherent motivations of the actors and the regulatory confines of the institutional structure plays a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of BUMDES programmes.

This study's findings reveal that BUMDES accountability practices are embodied in a variety of forms, including written reports, annual village meetings, and a range of informational media such as bulletin boards, websites, social media platforms, and informal interactions with residents. Additionally, progress meetings, inspection routines, the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa/APBDES*), village regulations, and business proposals are essential elements of these accountability frameworks. These diverse practices of accountability resonate with the concept of material practices as explored by Friedland and Alford (1991), Thornton and Ocasio (2008), and Lepoutre and Valente (2012), illustrating how tangible and intangible elements interplay to construct a comprehensive accountability mechanism within BUMDES operations.

The content analysis of these various accountability mechanisms employed by BUMDES is succinctly summarised in Figure 4. It is observed that written reports serve as the primary mode of communication

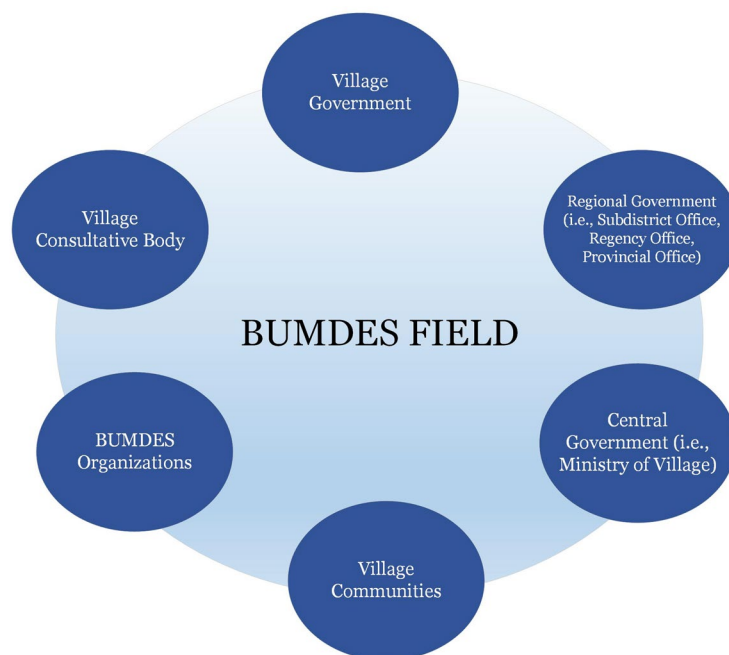


Figure 3. BUMDES organisational actors.
Source: Authors' analysis.

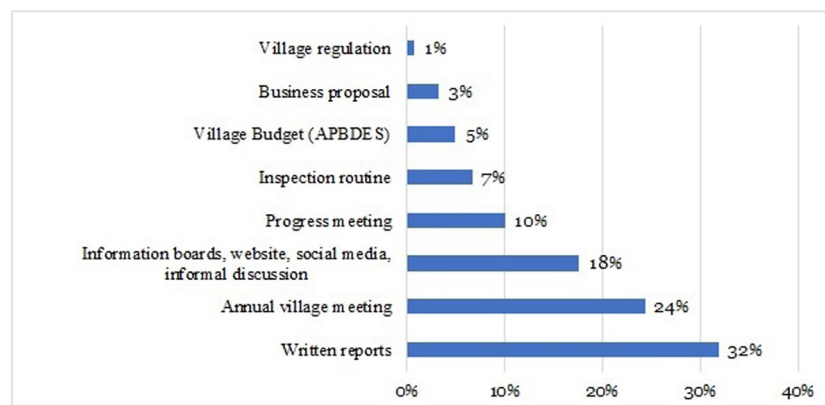


Figure 4. Artefacts in BUMDES accountability practice.

Source: Authors' analysis.

for BUMDES accountability, which is presented to stakeholders in the context of the annual village meeting.

"Financial statements and operational problems are routinely presented in a written report to the supervisory board of three (3) people. From the supervisors, it is then copied to the Village Head as the advisor." (Participant P14, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

"We invite the villagers to attend the BUMDES village meetings. [These meetings are attended by] members of BPD and Village Community Resilience Institutions (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa/LKMD*), community leaders such as the heads of the neighbourhood units, hamlet heads, and female cadres from Family Welfare Empowerment Organisations. (Participant P4, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

"Once a month, a regular meeting will be held between BUMDES administrators, the village head, and supervisors. Once every three months, there is a large-scale performance evaluation with the Village Consultative Body ... we also submit periodic annual reports to the Village Empowerment Service at the Regency Office." (Participant P2, Village Head, 2022)

Accountability reports generated by BUMDES are primarily targeted towards village authorities and a select assembly of community representatives gathered at the annual village meetings. This group notably includes religious and educational leaders, youth and family welfare advocates, hamlet and neighbourhood unit heads, alongside members of the Village Consultative Body. Additionally, these reports are indirectly communicated to the regional government at both regency and provincial tiers through the District Office. These practices echo the concepts of upward hierarchical and holistic accountability outlined by O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008). In this context, upward-hierarchical accountability refers to BUMDES's responsibility towards the Village Head, Village Consultative Body, and regional government. Conversely, holistic accountability encompasses BUMDES's obligations towards broader village community representatives, highlighting a multifaceted approach to accountability within BUMDES operations.

The implementation of BUMDES accountability is facilitated through four main mechanisms: (1) participatory mechanisms, such as meetings, hearings, and discussions with pertinent stakeholders; (2) reporting and disclosure through both formal documentation and digital channels like WhatsApp groups, websites and social media; (3) performance evaluations; and (4) assessments. These findings align with Ebrahim's (2003) emphasis on the importance of reporting, disclosure, performance evaluation, and control mechanisms, incorporating both formal settings like village deliberation meetings and informal interactions, including monthly recitations and direct participation in business units and programmes. The adaptation to modern communication platforms, such as WhatsApp groups and social media for direct engagement with villagers, illustrates an expanded repertoire of accountability mechanisms employed by BUMDES. The accountability mechanisms employed in BUMDES are summarised in Figure 5.

Notably, the study indicates a lack of self-regulation mechanisms, typically characterised by standard operating procedures and ethical codes, pinpointing a potential area for enhancement in BUMDES's accountability practices. This gap may be attributed to the nascent stage of the BUMDES initiative, which could imply a developmental lag in adopting self-regulatory practices, possibly compounded by a lack of managerial capacity for their effective formulation and enforcement.

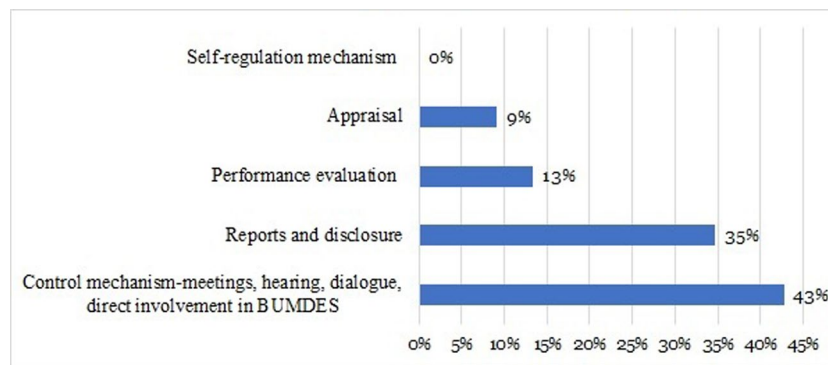


Figure 5. Accountability mechanisms in BUMDES.

Source: Authors' analysis.

Moreover, while social audits through performance evaluations by regional governments are recognised, their execution is markedly hampered by the centralisation of authoritative power, limiting the regional government's role in ensuring administrative compliance for capital funding from the village to BUMDES. This includes the validation of annual Village Regulations relevant to BUMDES before capital disbursement. Additionally, the regional authorities lack the mandate to impose sanctions for BUMDES violations, their role being confined to providing advisory support for enhancement. This scenario highlights a restricted regulatory environment at the regional level for BUMDES oversight and underscores a significant deviation from Ebrahim's (2003) propositions due to the constrained application of self-regulation and social audit mechanisms, necessitating further attention and intervention.

"We are not authorised to conduct inspections but are only limited to the authority to provide coaching to BUMDES. Now it's even worse, both the inspection and coaching authority from the provincial government are taken off. Both are now taken over by the central government." (Participant P8, Regional Government, 2022)

The examination of ten BUMDES organisations within this study reveals that their annual reports primarily consist of financial statements, including profit and loss statements and balance sheets. Nonetheless, the compilation of these reports often encounters errors in both the presentation and recording of transactions. Beyond financial data, these reports detail the fulfilment of BUMDES work programmes over the previous year, with some organisations also disclosing their involvement in social activities. These activities range from operating charity shops providing free necessities, funding religious celebrations, renovating uninhabitable homes, to offering death compensation to families of deceased villagers. This multifaceted reporting aligns with Behn's (2001) perspective on effective accountability practices within BUMDES.

However, the findings also underscore the need for enhancing the financial literacy of BUMDES administrators. Improving their capabilities in accurate transaction recording and financial report preparation is essential for ensuring that the financial aspects of BUMDES operations are transparently and correctly represented in the profit and loss reports and balance sheets. This enhancement is critical for upholding the standards of accountability and facilitating more informed decision-making and oversight within BUMDES frameworks.

In exploring the notion of fairness within the framework of BUMDES accountability, it becomes evident that equitable access and engagement in BUMDES activities are pivotal. The village government purports to provide equal opportunities by publicly announcing nomination opportunities for BUMDES management roles, aiming for transparent communication. Nonetheless, this assertion appears to be at odds with the villagers' experiences and lacks corroboration from readily accessible information sources like bulletin boards and social media.

Fairness dictates that all stakeholders, without exception, should have unhindered access to information and active participation in decision-making processes. However, the investigation reveals a selective inclusion in village meetings, predominantly extending invitations to community leaders and organisational representatives, thereby sidelining the broader villager demographic.

Conversely, evidence from two BUMDES organisations illustrates their commitment to transparency by making financial performance data accessible to village communities:

"We display BUMDES's monthly financial reports on the bulletin board. Villagers are welcome to view them anytime during the weekdays." (Participant P38, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

"BUMDES's annual reports are available for download on our village website. We also regularly update the site with news about BUMDES activities." (Participant P45, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

These statements, corroborated by villagers and direct observations, indicate a degree of transparency in sharing financial reports, as one villager affirms, "*I know the BUMDES financial reports because the reports are transparent...*" (Participant P36, 2022). In summary, while efforts to ensure fairness in BUMDES accountability are observable, particularly in disseminating financial information, the overall implementation falls short of the ideals of inclusivity and comprehensive stakeholder engagement as posited by Behn (2001). The observed limitations in ensuring fairness stem from inadequate measures for public information dissemination and a lack of enforcement mechanisms for ensuring compliance, leading to potential stakeholder dissatisfaction. This gap highlights a critical area for improvement in fostering a more transparent and inclusive BUMDES accountability framework.

In evaluating accountability for performance among the BUMDES entities surveyed, it emerges that only a singular BUMDES organisation distinctly illustrates its impact through its annual report. This report notably includes data on the employment of vulnerable community members, shifts in the village's poverty levels, and the volume of waste processed by the BUMDES enterprise. This level of transparency and detail aligns with the accountability for performance framework suggested by Behn (2001), providing stakeholders with measurable outcomes of BUMDES activities.

In stark contrast, the remaining nine BUMDES organisations do not furnish any discernible information regarding the tangible results or impacts of their programmes on the village community. This omission points to a significant gap in performance accountability within the majority of BUMDES entities studied, underscoring a critical area for enhancement. The absence of detailed outcomes or impacts in their reports limits stakeholders' ability to assess the effectiveness and value of BUMDES initiatives, thereby constraining the overall accountability framework as advocated by Behn (2001) in this context.

5.2. Multiple logics in BUMDES accountability

The discerned material practices in the BUMDES accountability reveal the presence of diverse logics. These multiple logics within BUMDES draw upon symbolic constructs, which encompass various sources such as regulations associated with BUMDES, societal norms, and belief systems. Additionally, the established institutional framework within the BUMDES domain exerts a significant influence on the BUMDES logics, which are traced back to the state, as manifested in regulatory measures aimed at overseeing BUMDES governance, corporate values emphasising professionalism in BUMDES management, societal value systems, family dynamics, and religious teachings, with a particular emphasis on Islamic values.

The legislative framework provided by the state significantly shapes the operational logic of BUMDES organisations, primarily through Law Number 6 of 2014 on Village and its subsequent regulations enacted by both central and regional governments. This includes Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021, Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Number 4 of 2015, and Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Number 6 of 2020. Additionally, specific regional government regulations pertinent to BUMDES, such as the Regulation of Bogor Regency Number 78 of 2018, play a crucial role. Moreover, the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2020 on Job Creation further influences BUMDES, particularly concerning employment arrangements within the organisation. The BUMDES Accounting Information System (SIA BUMDES), established by the Finance and Development Supervisory Agency (*Badan Pengawasan Keuangan dan Pembangunan/BPKP*) in 2019, also significantly contributes to the financial reporting practices and overall logic guiding BUMDES operations.

"The Law No. 6 of 2014 on Village states that every year BUMDES must report their business activities to the Village Government, the Village Consultative Body, and the community." (Participant P16, Village Head, 2022)

"Ministry of Village Regulation No. 3 of 2021 and Bogor Regent Regulation No. 79 of 2018 states that BUMDES village meetings must be held once a year, and accountability reports must be presented at least 2 times a year." (Participant P17, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

"The BUMDES annual meeting or BUMDES Accountability Meeting is held at the annual village meeting. It is an obligation to do so according to the regulations." (Participant P2, Village Head, 2022)

This research uncovers that alongside traditional state influence, other institutional orders like corporations, communities, family structures, and religious institutions significantly shape the BUMDES field. Corporations introduce a logic centred on profit generation, underscoring the importance of commercial performance, innovation, and professional management. Communities contribute to a trustworthiness logic, fostering a sense of ownership, participation, and a drive towards social benefits within the BUMDES framework. Family structures impart a logic of cooperation and kinship, integral to the management ethos of BUMDES, while religious institutions imbue a compliance logic with Islamic teachings, reinforcing the social utility of BUMDES activities for the village community.

These findings resonate with the theoretical propositions of Friedland and Alford (1991) and Thornton and Ocasio (2008), who emphasize how various institutional orders shape the logics employed by actors within a field. Interestingly, this study highlights that the institutional frameworks traditionally associated with markets, professions, and democracy are less visibly influential within the BUMDES context, pointing towards a nuanced interplay of influences where the state, community, corporations, family, and religious teachings emerge as predominant forces. This observation underscores the complex and localized nature of institutional influences on BUMDES, suggesting a distinctive blend of logics that govern its operation and accountability practices.

This study uncovers a spectrum of ten distinct logics that form the foundation of BUMDES organisations' accountability practices, with social orientation being the most prevalent at 30% (see Figure 6). This logic, deeply informed by regulatory frameworks, positions BUMDES as a critical component of the social safety net, aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of vulnerable communities. A village head remarked, *"BUMDES...is part of the social safety net...for vulnerable communities"* (Participant P44, Village Head, 2022), highlighting BUMDES's role in societal welfare and crisis support.

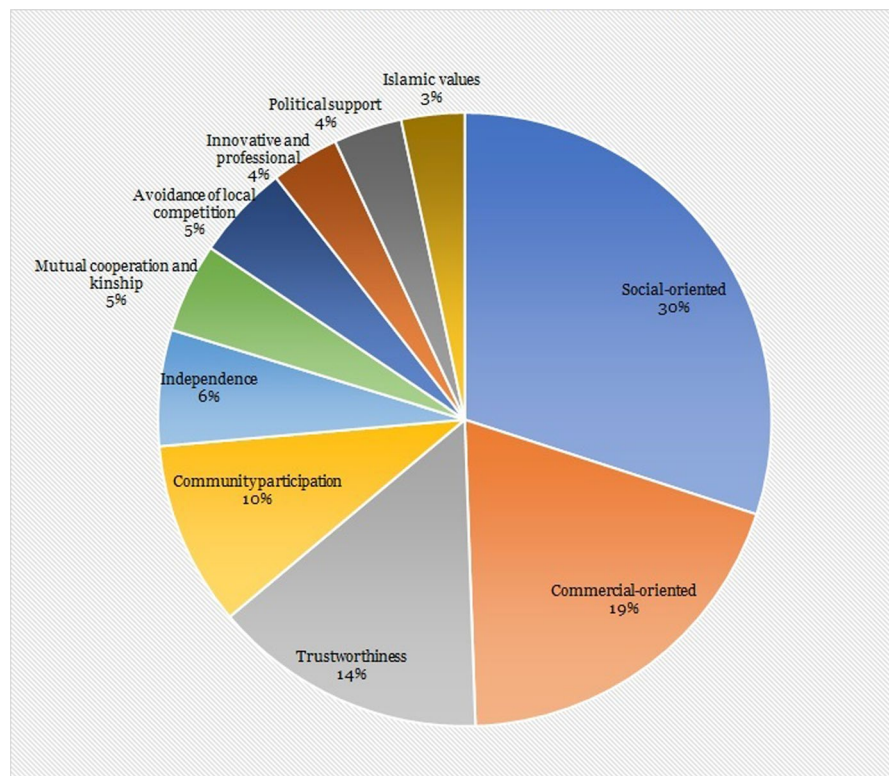


Figure 6. Multiple logics in BUMDES accountability.
Source: Authors' analysis.

The second dominant logic is commercial orientation, stressing the necessity for BUMDES to be profit-generating, contributing to the village's financial base. This perspective is reinforced by regulatory guidelines, with a regional government official noting, *"Good BUMDES performance is...earning a profit, and being able to contribute...in the form of Village Original Income"* (Participant P8, Regional Government Official, 2022).

Trustworthiness, anchored in adherence to regulatory mandates and transparency, emerges as the third logic. It is underscored by the requirement for annual reporting of BUMDES activities, fostering accountability and public trust. Community participation, valuing collective development and villager engagement, is identified as the fourth logic, followed by the aspiration for independence and self-sufficiency, which is the fifth.

The sixth logic of cooperation and kinship, and the seventh advocating for non-competitive practices with local businesses, both reflect a commitment to communal harmony and economic inclusivity. Innovation and professionalism, as the eighth logic, urge entrepreneurial dynamism and adept management for BUMDES's progression. Political support, positioned as the ninth logic, underlines BUMDES's integration within village governance, necessitating political endorsement.

Lastly, the tenth logic, guided by Islamic values, steers BUMDES towards ethical financial practices, promoting social welfare through Sharia-compliant services.

Collectively, these logics intricately weave together social welfare objectives, economic sustainability, and ethical governance within BUMDES's accountability frameworks. This intricate tapestry of logics resonates with the constructs of regulations, societal norms, and belief systems explored by scholars like Friedland and Alford (1991), Lepoutre and Valente (2012), and Thornton and Ocasio (2008), underscores the complex yet cohesive nature of BUMDES accountability practices.

5.3. Overarching logic of BUMDES

This study identifies that the primary logic driving BUMDES organisations is significantly influenced by the interactions within the BUMDES field and the institutional frameworks that guide these interactions. The analysis reveals a notable prevalence of social-oriented and commercial-oriented logics, holding significant portions of 30% and 19.4%, respectively. Further in-depth examination through a constant comparative method uncovers stakeholders such as village heads, Village Consultative Body members, BUMDES administrators, and villagers who predominantly view BUMDES activities through the lens of social orientation. In contrast, regional government officials exhibit a stronger inclination towards commercial orientations. Figure 7 displays the symbolic constructions of BUMDES as perceived by different participant groups.

Subsequent logics are observed as extensions of these two dominant perspectives, serving as operational indicators for their implementation. The social-oriented logic, aimed at promoting village community welfare, encompasses aspects of trustworthiness, community participation, local competition prevention, cooperation and kinship, political support, and Islamic values. Illustrative comments include acknowledgements of BUMDES's role in safeguarding local enterprises, enhancing community welfare, promoting savings to avoid debt traps, fostering community participation, and acting as a vehicle for political support.

"The measure of the success of BUMDES from a social perspective is how much benefit it brings to the community. That is why BUMDES should not destroy village community businesses, and BUMDES is part of the social safety net to increase access to decent livelihoods for the vulnerable groups." (Participant P44, Village Head, 2022)

"BUMDES cannot run businesses that threaten community businesses and cannot attempt to only enrich itself. There are many things we must pay attention to – from preparing budgets, conceptualising and planning a business, selecting the management team, and operating the business to preparing reports." (Participant P17, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

"BUMDES educates residents to change their lifestyle from consumptive to productive by saving so that they are no longer trapped in debt to illegal loan sharks who do not comply with sharia law." (Participant P17, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

"First, what we build is community participation. Therefore, in every village meeting, we involve all elements of the community, including the younger generation who will implement and continue our programme. We hope that with community participation the programme we run can be sustainable." (Participant P9, Village Head, 2022)

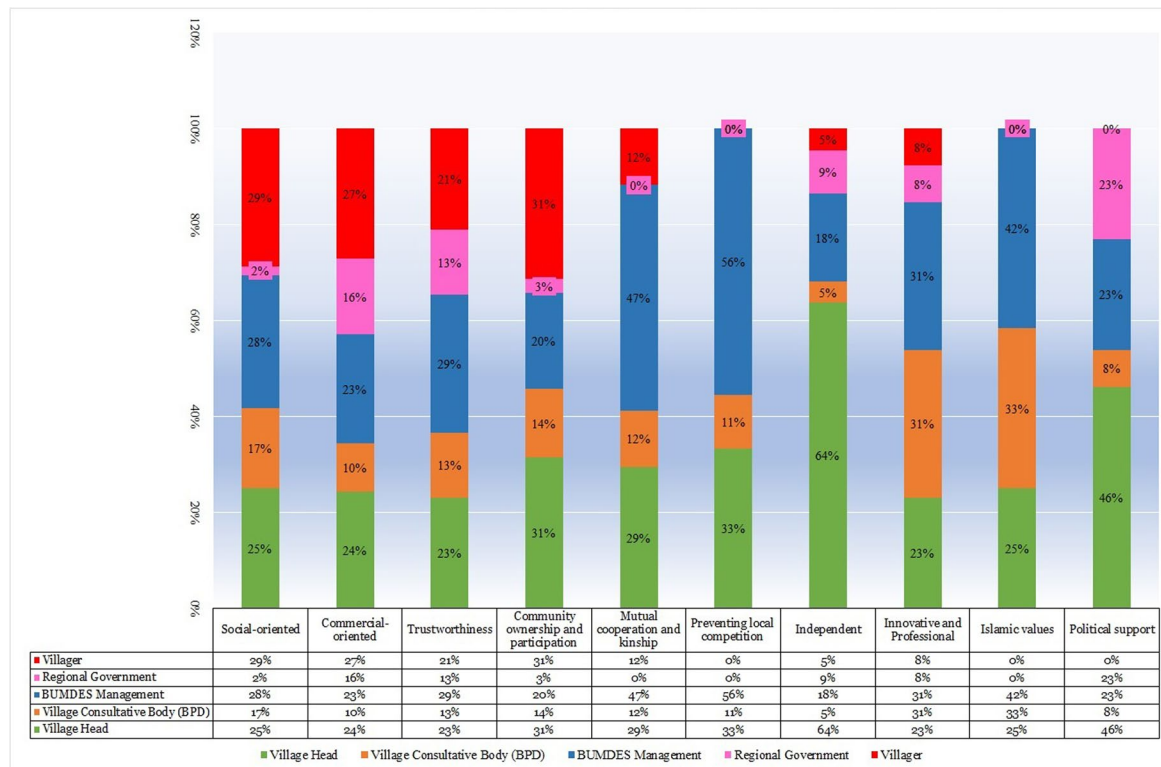


Figure 7. BUMDES symbolic constructions by group of participants.

Source: Authors' analysis.

"... BUMDES is also a tool of political support to make the village a democratic area where the villagers have the opportunity to directly utilise the resources available in the village." (Participant P44, Village Head, 2022)

Conversely, the commercial orientation of BUMDES, focused on generating profit and enhancing the village's income, is marked by innovative management and self-sufficiency. Statements supporting this include the critical role of BUMDES in infrastructure development during financial challenges and the emphasis on innovation and autonomy in BUMDES management, distinguishing its operational approach from typical governmental processes. The quotes below confirm this finding.

"Since we have village original income from BUMDES, we are still able to build physical infrastructure safely during the (COVID-19) pandemic. Without BUMDES, this will not be possible because, during the pandemic, the focus was on allocating village funds for the payments of Direct Cash Assistance." (Participant P2, Village Head, 2022)

"...BUMDES must be creative in making innovations. Even though BUMDES belongs to the village, the way it works is not similar to that of the government. That is why we refer to the person in charge of BUMDES as "Director" instead of "Chairman". Chairmen's decisions are collegial and collective, while directors can autonomously make the best decisions for the sake of their businesses." (Participant P38, BUMDES Administrator, 2022)

The outcomes of this research delineate a nuanced interplay between social and commercial priorities within BUMDES organisations, underscoring their composite role in promoting community well-being alongside economic advancement. The coexistence of social-oriented and commercial-oriented logics is deemed pivotal for the effective functioning of BUMDES, with financial performance underpinning the social initiatives they undertake. Therefore, these dual logics not only cohabit but also define the distinct nature of BUMDES organisations, as evidenced by the following remarks:

"...when I am asked, which one is prioritised, both the social and economic perspectives should weigh equally. That is what makes BUMDES distinctive; it is a hybrid entity." (Participant P44, Village Head, 2022)

"...we can use the income earned by BUMDES to generate social and education funds, so that we can realise the expectations of the community, especially in building infrastructure so that the village economy improves." (Participant P2, Village Head, 2022)

In this investigation, a variety of logics within the BUMDES framework have been identified, engaging in interactions that either complement or compete with each other throughout the institutionalisation process, ultimately leading to the development of an overarching logic. Significantly, the dominant logic that characterises BUMDES is not solely predicated on the commercially oriented financial rationale initially envisaged in the BUMDES regulations established by the government. In contrast, a socially oriented logic also emerges as a central component of this overarching logic, born out of a process of interpretation, internal learning, and interactions among BUMDES field actors. The study reveals that logics such as trustworthiness, community participation, independence, cooperation, kinship, and the avoidance of local competition align with the social-oriented logic, while the logics of innovation and professionalism, along with financial independence, align with a commercial orientation. Consequently, the BUMDES institution is governed by an overarching logic that integrates both social and commercial orientations, with both deemed equally vital for BUMDES's effective operation and enduring sustainability.

This observation concurs with the viewpoints advocated by Purdy and Gray (2009); McPherson and Sauder (2013); Siti-Nabiha et al. (2018); Mai (2019); and Nguyen et al. (2023) which underscore the significance of multiple logics coexisting, each playing a crucial role in ensuring the sustainable and effective function of BUMDES organisations in the long term.

Moreover, this amalgamation of social and commercial orientations underscores that the institutionalisation process within BUMDES is influenced by more than just pre-existing norms, values, and beliefs, as suggested by 'Old Institutionalism' (Selznick, 1949, 1952, 1957; Oliver, 1991; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999), or solely by coercive isomorphism stemming from government regulations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Instead, the comprehensive logic of BUMDES emerges from the nuanced interplay of interpretation, internal learning, and actor interactions within the BUMDES domain, showcasing a synthesis of socially oriented logic alongside the commercially oriented logic dictated by government stipulations on BUMDES. These findings lend empirical support to the Institutional Logic framework initially formulated by Friedland and Alford (1991) and further elaborated by Lepoutre and Valente (2012) and (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), suggesting that institutions represent broad patterns that extend beyond individual organisations, crafted from a mix of concrete practices and symbolic constructs.

A critical insight from this study's findings is the acknowledgement that both social and commercial orientations are intrinsically linked and equally important. The realisation of social objectives is contingent upon commercial success, just as the significance of commercial endeavours is enhanced when their benefits are equitably distributed within the village community.

As an implication, the success of BUMDES relies on its capacity to effectively merge these dual orientations. Failure to achieve this balance may compromise the initiative's effectiveness. In Indonesia's culturally rich context, persuasive negotiation and dialogue are essential for securing stakeholder trust within the BUMDES arena, thereby facilitating synergy between social and commercial objectives and encouraging community engagement in BUMDES programmes. This approach is in alignment with the broader national ambition of the BUMDES programme to elevate the quality of life within rural communities.

6. Summary and conclusion

In the operation of BUMDES, this study unveils a rich tapestry of logics driven by an interplay of governmental regulations and societal norms, including those rooted in Islamic teachings. These form the bedrock of the cognitive frameworks for actors within the BUMDES sphere, with the government playing a pivotal role in shaping operational and accountability practices. Material practices identified, such as written reports and social media engagement, highlight a clear commitment to financial accountability. However, areas like fairness and performance accountability appear less developed.

The research surfaces a spectrum of logics ranging from social and commercial orientations to trustworthiness and community participation, underscoring the coexistence of social-oriented and commercial-oriented logics as foundational to BUMDES's decision-making processes. This duality is echoed in the sentiments of BUMDES participants, who see the merging of social goals with commercial profitability as essential and synergistic. The study posits that the success of BUMDES hinges on

effectively leveraging this synergy, with a particular emphasis on engaging village communities through persuasive, negotiated, and dialogic means within Indonesia's complex cultural landscape.

The government's role is thus underscored in facilitating BUMDES's success, requiring a concerted effort to clarify programme goals, reconcile stakeholder understandings, and promote responsible fund management for tangible community benefits. Recommendations include a collaborative effort among stakeholders to refine BUMDES programmes and address challenges, alongside a critical review of regulations to ensure a consistent logic in social and financial performance metrics.

Enhancing BUMDES's accountability and operational efficacy involves a structured curriculum to build the capacities of BUMDES personnel, integrating feedback from a wide array of experts and ensuring accessibility through online platforms. Moreover, linking BUMDES programmes to a rating system that reflects compliance with capacity-building policies could incentivise improvement and accountability, contributing significantly to the overall performance of BUMDES organisations across Indonesia.

This comprehensive approach, blending regulatory refinement, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement, aims to fortify the operational and accountability frameworks of BUMDES, aligning with both social and commercial imperatives for the betterment of rural communities in Indonesia.

This study has been conducted within certain constraints that warrant acknowledgement. A significant limitation is the lack of input from participants associated with the central government, especially the Ministry of Villages. Their perspectives could have substantially broadened the scope of insights within the findings. This shortfall arose due to difficulties in securing engagement from representatives at the central government level, a situation further exacerbated by the time-bound nature of this research endeavour.

Furthermore, this research recognises the possibility of bias influencing the identification and categorisation of themes that emerged from the data. There exists a continuous need to bolster the integrity of the research by addressing such biases. This necessitates a commitment to maintaining a meticulous and introspective approach to analysis, ensuring that the research adheres to the highest standards of academic rigour and quality.

This research proposes a compelling avenue for future research to delve into the dynamics of power struggles among the actors responsible for accountability within the BUMDES framework. Specifically, it calls for an investigation into how these actors demonstrate proficiency in navigating and reconciling the varied interests of different stakeholders. A detailed examination of the complex strategies and mechanisms BUMDES organisations employ to manage power dynamics and mediate conflicting interests could greatly deepen our understanding of accountability practices within the BUMDES context. Such research would not only illuminate the operational challenges faced by BUMDES organisations but also offer insights into the effectiveness of their accountability mechanisms in fostering equitable and sustainable community development.

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Authors' contributions

Desti Fitriani was responsible for the initial conceptualisation and design, data analysis and interpretation, and the drafting of the manuscript. Amirul Shah Md. Shahbudin and Elvia R. Shauki contributed to the review of the conceptualisation and design, data analysis and interpretation, conducted critical assessments of the content, and

provided their approval for the final version to be published. The authors agree to be responsible for all aspects of this work.

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Data availability statement

Data will be made available upon request from the corresponding author.

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