EKSTERNAL COMPLAIN HANDLING MECHANISM IN POPULATION DATA GOVERNANCE AT THE KEMENDUKBANGGA/BKKBN BENGKULU PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE

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LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

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Dear Author: **Ahmad Abdullah Alfarisi, Jatmiko Yogopriyatno, Yorry Hardayani**
Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia

We are glad to inform you that research manuscript entitled **"External Complaint Handling Mechanism in Population Data Governance: A Study of the Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office of the Ministry of Population and Family Development/National Population and Family Planning Agency"** has been accepted for publication in Journal of Social and Policy Issues on Vol. 6 No. 3, September 2026.

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Best Regards,

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External Complaint Handling Mechanisms in Population Data Governance at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office

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A B S T R A C T

Purpose This study analyzes the external complaint handling mechanism in population data governance at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office, amid the institutional transformation that followed (*Perpres No. 180 Tahun 2024*, n.d.) and (*Perpres No. 181 Tahun 2024*, n.d.). Method This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants from the Accountability Division and the Public Information Disclosure Division, together with non-participant observation, and were complemented by secondary data in the form of budget and performance documents (RKAKL, Renstra, LAKIP, and Performance Agreements). The analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, with validation through source triangulation and member checking. Findings The three dimensions of complaint management show uneven maturity. Complaint channels are available through multiple routes, but their stimulation is weak because public participation is low and budgetary support is extremely minimal. Complaint handling is fully resolved on the formal audit channel with no outstanding recommendations, but is vulnerable for routine complaints because provincial-level regulations have not yet been aligned. The analysis and utilization of complaints have not been systemically institutionalized because technical feedback has not been aggregated into organizational learning. Implications The institution needs to build an integrated digital complaint channel, a data-dispute handling SOP aligned with the new nomenclature, and a complaint aggregation mechanism for organizational learning. Originality This study applies the complaint management framework in its entirety to the domain of population data governance during institutional transformation, a combination of contexts that has rarely been examined.

INTRODUCTION

High-quality population data governance is the primary foundation of evidence-based development planning. In the era of digital government, population information systems are no longer merely instruments for administrative record-keeping, but strategic infrastructure that determines the quality of policy across various development sectors. A number of studies emphasize that the implementation of electronic government systems consistently generates public value in the form of improved service efficiency, transparency, and accountability in data management (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). These values, as emphasized by (Bannister & Connolly, 2014), do not arise automatically from technology, but depend on new relationships among government, citizens, and stakeholders, relationships in which feedback mechanisms play a central role as guarantors of data quality. (Bertot et al., 2010) add that information and communication technology will foster a culture of transparency only when accompanied by channels that enable citizens and external partners to examine, question, and correct the data produced by government systems.

In Indonesia, the Family Information System (SIGA), managed by the National Population and Family Planning Board, has become the backbone of reporting for the Bangga Kencana program. Under (PP No. 87 Tahun 2014, n.d.), SIGA is the official instrument that produces Family Data Collection data, field extension-worker activity data, and contraceptive service data that serve as references for national and regional policy. Since its full implementation on 1 January 2022 and its subsequent integration with ELSIMIL, Verval, and SIRIKA, SIGA has developed into a complex population data node that is critical for decision-making. From the perspective of (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002) on the transformation of bureaucracy from the street level to the system level, a system such as SIGA shifts much of the administrative discretion from field officers to the architecture of the system itself, so that the accuracy and traceability of data increasingly depend on how well the system is able to absorb and act upon external corrections.

The institutional context underlying this system changed fundamentally when (Perpres No. 180 Tahun 2024, n.d.) established the Ministry of Population and Family Development (Kemendukbangga), while (Perpres No. 181 Tahun 2024, n.d.) affirmed that BKKBN continues to exist as a non-ministerial government agency. This dual construction gave rise to the regional unit nomenclature "Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Provincial Representative Office" and, at the same time, created a space of procedural uncertainty that deserves close attention. Such a transformation requires adjustments to derivative regulations that do not necessarily proceed as quickly as changes at the central level. (Carroll et al., 2022), in a cross-national mapping of changes in the structure of central bureaucracies, found that episodes of institutional reorganization are often followed by periods of adjustment of functions and authorities that are not always completed at the same time as the regulations

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establishing them are issued. It is precisely in this adjustment gap that the governance of complaints becomes relevant to examine.

In Bengkulu Province, this institution manages the population data of ten regencies and cities with a population of approximately 2.11 million people (Provinsi Bengkulu Dalam Angka 2024 - Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Bengkulu, n.d.). The complexity of management is evident in the various indicators that rely on SIGA, including stunting prevalence, which varies sharply between regions. Ironically, the region recorded as the most optimal in operating SIGA during the early phase of implementation actually recorded the highest stunting prevalence in 2022. Such a gap implies that the accuracy of field data cannot be guaranteed merely by the availability of an application; it requires a reliable complaint mechanism so that anomalies between actual conditions and system figures can be reported and corrected.

Normatively, the existence of a complaint mechanism is not optional. (UU No. 25 Tahun 2009, n.d.) requires service providers to provide easily accessible complaint facilities; this obligation is reinforced by (UU No. 37 Tahun 2008, n.d.), (UU No. 14 Tahun 2008, n.d.), (PP No. 96 Tahun 2012, n.d.), and (PERPRES No. 76 Tahun 2013, n.d.), which integrates cross-agency complaints through SP4N-LAPOR!. This legal framework affirms that complaint handling is not merely a managerial choice, but an obligation inherent in every public service provider, including Kemendukbangga/BKKBN. Nevertheless, a comprehensive normative mandate often stands at a distance from actual practice, particularly in managing feedback from external actors such as the Ombudsman, the DPRD, the BPKP, the media, partner institutions, and the public. This distance between mandate and practice is the starting point of this study.

To read this distance systematically, this study relies on a two-layer theoretical framework. At the umbrella level, Governance Theory is used, which views the performance of public functions not as the monopoly of a single actor, but as a network of actors inside and outside government that are interlinked through coordination and feedback mechanisms (Stoker, 1998); (Pierre et al., 2001). From this perspective, complaints from the Ombudsman, the DPRD, the media, partner institutions, and the public are not disturbances to be suppressed, but nodes in the governance network that enable continuous correction of the institution's performance. At the applied level, Complaint Management Theory from (Stauss & Seidel, 2004) is used, which outlines the complaint management cycle in three interdependent dimensions: complaint stimulation, namely the organization's active efforts to facilitate and encourage dissatisfied external parties to be willing to voice their grievances formally; complaint handling, namely the entire process of receiving, processing, and resolving incoming complaints; and complaint analysis and utilization, namely the aggregation and analysis of complaint patterns so that they can be used as input for systemic improvement. As a complement, the accountability framework (Bovens, 2007) is used to position the complaint mechanism as a form of horizontal accountability, which differs fundamentally from vertical accountability toward the hierarchy and audit institutions, because it enables parties outside the organizational structure to demand accountability directly.

Recent literature has extensively highlighted complaint handling in the public sector, albeit with different emphases, and at least five studies are directly relevant to the positioning of this research. First, (Bewinda et al., 2024) mapped thirteen electronic and non-electronic complaint channels managed by the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government and showed that the breadth of channels does facilitate access, but the study stopped at mapping the channels without tracing how complaint outcomes are processed into systemic improvements. Second, (Ernawati et al., 2023) evaluated the JAKLAPOR complaint feature in the JAKI application in DKI Jakarta and found a fairly high level of satisfaction with response speed, but did not examine whether the complaint data collected were analyzed in aggregate for organizational learning. Third, (Nurlinah et al., 2025) in a survey study in Gowa Regency found that the availability of government digital services increases citizen trust, but the level of active citizen participation in submitting complaints remains low even though channels are widely available, a gap between positive perception and real engagement that has not been widely explained qualitatively. Fourth, (Khadijah et al., 2026) documented how mandatory e-government reform in the national ISBN service triggered what the authors call a digital shock, namely a sharp decline in the Public Satisfaction Index resulting from the tightening of governance parameters without adequate friction management, a warning that stronger control does not automatically translate into service responsiveness. Fifth, at the conceptual level, (Vigoda-Gadot, 2000) asserts that bureaucratic responsiveness to citizen complaints is the most fundamental measure of the quality of public administration, while (Kim & Lee, 2012) and (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014) show that electronic participation and transparency realized through openness to complaints are directly proportional to public trust in government.

To establish the position of this gap empirically, a keyword co-occurrence analysis was also conducted on a corpus of international literature on public sector complaint handling using VOSviewer software. The resulting bibliometric map, presented in Figure 1, contains 54 items, 5 clusters, and 490 links, with a total link strength of 726, or an average link strength of about 1.48 per link. These figures reflect a dense and tightly interconnected body of literature, and also indicate that public sector complaint handling has become a subject of substantial academic attention.

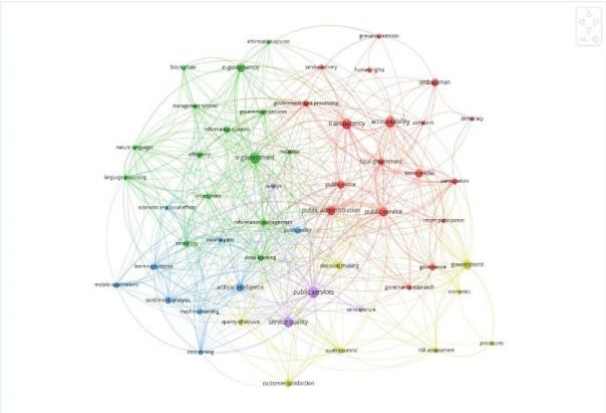


Figure 1. Keyword Co-occurrence Map of the Public Sector Complaint Handling Literature

Source: Processed with VOSviewer (2026).

The first cluster, dominated by the keywords accountability, transparency, complaint, ombudsman, and citizen participation, represents the theoretical core of this study and affirms the relevance of the complaint management framework within the

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frame of governance theory. The second cluster, populated by e-governance, e-government, and information systems, represents the digital transformation dimension that forms the backdrop of SIGA. The third cluster, which contains artificial intelligence, sentiment analysis, and data mining, actually reveals a gap that can be positioned as the novelty of this study: global research is beginning to move toward techno-solutionist approaches to processing complaints automatically, while in-depth and contextual qualitative understanding of complaint processes and mechanisms, particularly in institutions undergoing institutional transformation, is still rarely reached. The fourth cluster, which contains service quality and service failure, bridges complaint management theory with public administration practice and is directly relevant to the third dimension of the framework of (Stauss & Seidel, 2004).

Based on the above discussion, the research gap can be formulated at three points. First, most previous studies map the availability of, and satisfaction with, complaint channels, but rarely trace the entire complaint management cycle, from stimulation through to the utilization of analysis results, in an integrated manner. Second, the issue of external complaints has rarely been examined in the context of an institution undergoing dual institutional transformation such as that experienced by Kemendukbangga/BKKBN, a condition that creates its own institutional dynamics in terms of the clarity of authority to receive and follow up on complaints. Third, the domain of population data governance as the object of complaints, as represented by SIGA, has rarely been paired with the complaint management framework, even though population data is one of the types of public data most prone to disputes over accuracy. The novelty of this study lies in combining these three elements at once: a complete complaint management framework, the context of an ongoing institutional transformation, and the object of population data governance at the provincial level.

Building on this discussion, the research problem of this study can be stated as follows: "How do the external complaint handling mechanisms, encompassing complaint stimulation, complaint handling, and complaint analysis and utilization, operate at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office in supporting population data governance, and to what extent do these three dimensions function adequately in the context of the institutional transformation currently under way?" This formulation is broken down into three operational questions: how the institution facilitates and encourages external parties to submit complaints; how incoming complaints are processed, coordinated, and responded to; and how complaint outcomes are analyzed and used as input for improving data governance.

Answering these questions carries an urgency tied to the timing of this research. Regional representative offices were given a maximum deadline of two years after the issuance of (Perpres No. 180 Tahun 2024, n.d.) and (Perpres No. 181 Tahun 2024, n.d.) to complete their institutional adjustments, making the 2024-2026 period both a critical window and a window of opportunity: errors or delays in reorganizing the complaint mechanism during this period risk hardening into standard practices that are difficult to change once the new institutional status is fully institutionalized, while improvements made during this period have a high chance of being adopted as the foundation of long-term governance. This study therefore aims to analyze the external complaint handling mechanism at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office through three dimensions, namely complaint stimulation, complaint handling, and complaint analysis and utilization, while identifying its strengths and vulnerabilities in the context of the ongoing institutional transformation, so that its findings can serve as timely input for restructuring the mechanism.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical case study design (Creswell, 2014). This approach was chosen because the research question takes the form of "how," the researcher cannot manipulate the complaint mechanism that is currently in operation, and the phenomenon under study occurs in a real-life context whose boundaries are not always clear, three conditions that, according to (Yin, 2018), are the strongest reasons for choosing a case study design. The unit of analysis is the external complaint handling mechanism at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office as a single, holistic case, read through the three dimensions of Complaint Management (Stauss & Seidel, 2004): complaint stimulation, complaint handling, and complaint analysis and utilization.

This study uses two types of data. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observation at the research site. Secondary data were obtained through the study of official documents, namely the Ministry/Agency Work Plan and Budget (RKAKL) for Fiscal Year 2024, the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan (Renstra), the Government Agency Performance Reports (LAKIP) for 2024 and 2025, the 2026 Performance Agreement, and related regulations. These two types of data complement each other: primary data capture the perceptions and experiences of actors in the field, while secondary data verify and provide institutional context for what the informants conveyed.

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting informants who have knowledge, authority, and direct involvement in the complaint mechanism under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). The study targets eight categories of informants from both the institution's internal perspective and the external oversight perspective, as presented in Table 1. At the data collection stage reported in this article, in-depth interviews have been conducted and fully analyzed with two internal key informants, namely the person in charge of the Accountability Division (hereafter coded W-Weldi) and a staff member of the Public Information Disclosure Division (hereafter coded W-Frensi), who respectively command the issues of performance-audit reporting and of information disclosure and public participation. Triangulation with external perspectives (the Ombudsman, the DPRD, and the BPKP) was obtained through document study, namely audit reports and official correspondence involving these three institutions, while direct interviews with their representatives are planned for a later stage of the research.

Table 1. Research Informant Design

No.	Position/Title	Kode	Perspective	Technique
1	Head of the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office	W-KP	Internal	Document study

2	Person in charge of the Accountability Division (performance reporting & audit)	W-Weldi	Internal	In-depth interview (completed)
3	Staff of the Public Information Disclosure (KIP) Division	W-Frensi	Internal	In-depth interview (completed)
4	Complaint Service Staff / Data Working Team	W-TK	Internal	Document study; follow-up interview
5	Head of the Ombudsman RI Bengkulu Province Representative Office	W-OM	External	Document study; follow-up interview
6	Member of the Bengkulu Provincial DPRD (commission responsible for population affairs)	W-DP	External	Document study; follow-up interview
7	Auditor/Official of the BPKP Bengkulu Representative Office	W-BP	External	Document study; follow-up interview
8	Head of the Public Relations/PPID Sub-division	W-PP	Internal	Document study; follow-up interview

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6	Member of the Bengkulu Provincial DPRD (commission responsible for population affairs)	W-DP	External	Document study; follow-up interview
7	Auditor/Official of the BPKP Bengkulu Representative Office	W-BP	External	Document study; follow-up interview
8	Head of the Public Relations/PPID Sub-division	W-PP	Internal	Document study; follow-up interview

Source: Adapted from the research design; data collection status as of the preparation of this article (2026).

Primary data were collected through two techniques. The in-depth interviews used a semi-structured guide developed from the three dimensions of Complaint Management, with each session lasting approximately 60-90 minutes; the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and coded according to dimension and statement sequence number, so that each finding can be traced back to its source. Non-participant observation was conducted to observe the visibility and function of complaint channels at the research site. Secondary documents were analyzed by examining the consistency between the stated performance targets and the availability of the complaint instruments relevant to achieving them.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of (Miles, 2014), which proceeds simultaneously and iteratively through four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation was carried out by coding each informant statement according to the complaint management dimensions, then grouping these codes into larger themes. Data display took the form of descriptive narratives and comparison tables that bring interview findings together with documentary evidence. Conclusions were drawn gradually and tentatively from the beginning of the analysis, then verified through source triangulation (comparing informants' statements with official documents) and method triangulation (comparing interview results with observation results), and were further strengthened through member checking with key informants to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation before the final conclusions were formulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section answers the research problem directly by describing and, at the same time, interpreting the findings according to the three dimensions of Complaint Management, so that readers can see how the field data relate to their interpretation without having to move between sections. Each finding is traced to a primary source, namely the informant interview codes, or to the secondary source in the form of the underlying official documents, so that the argument built remains verifiable. The legal bases for information and complaint services applicable at this institution, as described in the introduction, serve as the reference for assessing the extent to which actual practice is consistent with its normative mandate.

On the complaint stimulation dimension, an overview of the complaint channels and information access available at this institution is summarized in Table 2. Informant W-Frensi explained that aggregate population data can be accessed by the public through SIGA (Family Information System) and SIPERINDU (Population Early Warning System), whereas individual data are excluded to protect privacy, so that access by outside agencies must go through an official letter. For service feedback, a monthly satisfaction survey, a WhatsApp complaint channel, direct complaints, and social media are available. The legal basis for providing these channels refers to the Public Information Disclosure Law, the Personal Data Protection Law, and (*Peraturan BKKBN No. 4 Tahun 2022*, n.d.)

Table 2. Complaint Channels and Public Information Access

Channel/Instrument	Function	Status in the Field
SIGA & SIPERINDU	Access to aggregate population data for the public and partners	Available and accessible
Monthly satisfaction survey	Collects feedback on service quality	Conducted routinely every month
WhatsApp & direct complaints	Channel for public grievances	Available; low utilization

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Social media	Public dissemination and interaction	Active; limited citizen participation
Written requests (official letters)	Access to individual data by external agencies	Formal and controlled (to protect privacy)
Budget allocation for the complaint service	Operational support for the complaint channel	Rp30,000.00 for a credit package/6 months (RKAKL 2024)

Source: Processed from interviews with informant W-Frensi and the RKAKL document of the BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office, FY 2024 (2026).

The issue that emerges is not the availability of channels, but the weak impetus for these channels to actually be used. Informant W-Frensi explicitly stated that public participation in overseeing information governance is "still limited" because public interest, particularly among teenagers who are the target group of the program, tends to favor digital entertainment content over government program information. This condition is compounded by limited operational support: the RKAKL document of the BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office for Fiscal Year 2024 (RO Code: 5297.PEA.001) records that the specific allocation for the public complaint service consists only of "the cost of a credit package for the Complaint Service" worth Rp30,000.00 for one package over six months, while the 2025-2029 Renstra places the complaint management function under the PPID without any accompanying interactive digital infrastructure specifically for handling data accuracy disputes.

This pattern is in line with what (Tax et al., 1998) describe as an organizational failure to cultivate the willingness of customers or partners to report: an organization that merely waits passively for complaints to arrive will always lack information about the actual problems experienced by its stakeholders. The findings in Bengkulu also enrich the argument of (Bewinda et al., 2024) that the breadth of channels is not directly proportional to their utilization: if even in DKI Jakarta, with its thirteen official channels, utilization remains a challenge, then in Bengkulu the problem is layered, because limited participatory impetus meets an extreme budget deficit. These findings are also consistent with the survey results of (Nurlinah et al., 2025) in Gowa Regency, which show that the availability of government digital services can increase citizen trust without necessarily raising their active participation in complaining, a gap between perception and real engagement that the two authors describe as participation that is "still symbolic." Thus, the weakness of complaint stimulation in Bengkulu is better read as a problem on the demand and resource side, not merely a scarcity of channels, a reaffirmation of the responsiveness thesis of (Vigoda-Gadot, 2000) that an institution that passively waits for complaints will always lack information about its actual problems, however many channels are formally provided.

On the complaint handling dimension, the character of external complaint handling at this institution is split according to the type of channel, as summarized in Table 3. Informant W-Weldi explained that performance audits conducted by external parties, such as the BPKP, are demand-driven, adjusting to the data needs of the requester, and that each finding is followed up through a structured flow: the finding is identified, the problem is broken down, and then a solution is sought that is matched against applicable regulations. He affirmed that "to date, all findings from external audits have been followed up by us," and assessed the vertical accountability mechanism on this channel as "effective." Interestingly, the largest burden of findings on this channel actually stems from mismatches between contraceptive distribution and the acceptor achievements reported by external parties at the regency/city level, rather than from internal provincial errors. Informant W-Weldi also affirmed that the institutional transition from BKKBN to Kemendukbangga did not disrupt the financial and program reporting mechanisms already in place, and that there was no period of unclear communication during this transition.

Table 3. Characteristics of External Complaint Handling by Channel

Aspect	Formal Audit Channel (e.g., BPKP)	Routine Complaint Channel
Trigger	Data request from an external party (demand-driven)	Complaints from cadres/agencies when the technical system encounters problems
Follow-up process	Identify → break down the problem → solution → match with regulations	Immediate technical fix (ad hoc)
Resolution status	Fully resolved; no outstanding recommendations	Resolved case by case; not recapitulated
Procedural basis	Refers to standard templates and standards	No dedicated data-dispute SOP yet
Main vulnerability	Many findings stem from external data mismatches	Alignment gap with (*UU No. 52 Tahun 2009*, n.d.) & Perka 82/2011

Source: Processed from interviews with informant W-Weldi and the LAKIP 2024–2025 documents (2026).

Nevertheless, behind this operational continuity, informant W-Weldi also revealed one important gap: regulations at the provincial level have not been aligned with the new ministerial status, with (UU No. 52 Tahun 2009, n.d.) and BKKBN Head Regulation Number 82 of 2011 reportedly not yet revised to follow the new nomenclature. Another weakness that consistently emerged, from both W-Weldi and W-Frensi, is limited human resource capacity, particularly in narrating and analyzing findings contextually and linking them to programs, rather than merely operating the system technically. For routine complaints outside the formal audit channel, such as complaints about failed data synchronization between systems submitted by cadres or agencies, fixes are made technically and immediately, but are not yet supported by a standard operating procedure (SOP) specifically for handling data disputes that is designed to fit the Kemendukbangga nomenclature.

The split between these two channels can be explained through the accountability framework of (Bovens, 2007): the formal audit channel is a form of vertical accountability that already has standard templates and standards, while the handling of routine complaints, which is more horizontal in nature, coming from cadres, agencies, and the public, has not yet received an equivalent set of procedural instruments. A similar pattern was found by (Carroll et al., 2022) in a cross-national mapping of the reorganization of central bureaucracies: episodes of institutional structural change rarely produce a total vacuum, but often leave gray areas, usually in functions that have no clear procedural "owner" after the reorganization, a pattern consistent with the position of routine complaints in Bengkulu. These findings also engage in dialogue with the warning of (Khadijah et al., 2026) regarding the trap of the trade-off between tighter governance and service quality: in Bengkulu, the strength of control on the

formal audit channel does not automatically spill over into responsiveness on the day-to-day routine complaint channel. In other words, complaint handling at this institution is strong on channels that have been hierarchically formalized, but not yet resilient on the channels that most often come into direct contact with technical problems in the field.

On the complaint analysis and utilization dimension, this institution has a clear entry point for feedback, namely the monthly user satisfaction survey of its services. Informant W-Frensi explained that it is from this survey that the institution "can handle, see the feedback on, the level of public satisfaction with public services" and identify aspects that need improvement. The follow-up of audit findings on the formal channel, as described above, also contains an element of utilization because it is always matched against applicable regulations.

The problem arises precisely when feedback from the day-to-day technical complaint channel is to be elevated into organizational knowledge. Based on informant statements and the 2026 Performance Agreement document, the established performance indicators, such as the percentage of local governments with quality data management (target 65%) and the Management Support Service Satisfaction Index (target 3.53 on a scale of 1-4), do not yet include a single indicator that specifically measures the level of analysis or utilization of public complaints, as summarized in Table 4. There is no periodic recapitulation of technical complaints, no trend analysis of recurring types of errors, and no evaluation forum that explicitly traces why the same operational obstacles continue to recur in regions that have not yet operated SIGA optimally.

Table 4. Gap between Existing Performance Indicators and Those Needed for Complaint Management

Evaluation Aspect	Existing Indicator (PK 2026)	Ideal Indicator	Gap
Population data quality	% of local governments with quality data management (target 65%)	% of data complaints followed up within a set time limit	No complaint responsiveness indicator yet
Service satisfaction	Management Support Service Satisfaction Index (target 3.53 on a 1–4 scale)	Complainant satisfaction with complaint handling	No complaint satisfaction indicator yet
Integrity/accountability	Integrity Zone Index (target level 1)	Ratio of resolved complaints to complaints received	No complaint resolution rate yet
System learning	No specific complaint-based indicator	Number of SOP/technical guideline updates based on complaint analysis per year	No knowledge management indicator yet

Source: Processed from the 2026 Performance Agreement of the BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office and LAKIP 2025 (2026).

This is the core contribution of these findings to the literature. (Mergel et al., 2019) assert that sustainable digital transformation of government requires continuous feedback mechanisms from users and external stakeholders, not merely the provision of a reporting channel at a single point in time; without continuous updating based on such feedback, investment in digital systems such as SIGA risks merely repeating the same weaknesses from one reporting period to the next. (Seneviratne, 2013) asserts that complaint handling that stops at individual resolution, without efforts to analyze patterns and use them for systemic improvement, is a significant waste of resources. In line with this, (Gruber et al., 2009) found that the strategic value of complaint handling lies in an organization's ability to turn individual complaints into a map of problems that can be acted on structurally, rather than in the speed of closing cases one by one. (Ernawati et al., 2023) in the JAKLAPOR case in DKI Jakarta showed a high level of citizen satisfaction with the speed of individual responses, but that study did not address whether the complaint data collected were actually aggregated into a basis for policy improvement, a problem that is clearly visible in the Bengkulu case: the institution has feedback instruments, but has not yet developed the habit of processing them into learning. (Bertot et al., 2010) remind us that a culture of transparency is formed not merely from the availability of open data, but from the institutional capacity to process external input into corrective action that can be verified by the public, a capacity that has not been fully built in this dimension.

Reading the three dimensions together, it appears that the maturity of the external complaint handling mechanism at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office is uneven, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Synthesis of the Maturity of the Three Complaint Management Dimensions

Dimension	Maturity	Key Notes
Complaint Stimulation	Moderate	Multiple channels are available, but participation is low and the budget is minimal; the problem lies on the demand and resource side, not in the supply of channels
Complaint Handling	Uneven	Fully resolved on the formal audit channel; vulnerable on routine complaints due to the absence of an SOP and the lack of provincial regulatory alignment
Complaint Analysis & Utilization	Low	Feedback is gathered through monthly surveys, but aggregation and pattern analysis of technical complaints have not been institutionalized

Source: Synthesis of research results (2026).

Complaint stimulation is at a moderate level because channels are already available through multiple routes but the participatory impetus is weak; complaint handling is uneven because it is fully resolved on the formal audit channel but vulnerable on the routine complaint channel; and complaint analysis and utilization is at the lowest level because feedback has been gathered but has not yet been processed into organizational knowledge. This pattern is in line with the finding of (jeffrey g. blodgett & stephen s, 1997) that procedural justice, which includes the openness of the process and the clarity of procedures, is the main determinant of an external party's decision to complain or to remain silent; when procedures are clear, as on the audit channel, external engagement proceeds well, but when procedures have not been institutionalized, as with

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routine complaints, the willingness of external parties to remain engaged risks declining even though their technical complaints are themselves resolved ad hoc. The position of the Ombudsman in this framework is also worth noting: (Seneviratne, 2013) describes the dual role of independent oversight bodies such as the Ombudsman, namely as a "safety valve" for dissatisfied parties and at the same time a "guardian" that drives systemic improvement, a role that can function optimally only when the overseen institution has adequate internal channels to follow up on the results of such oversight in a structured manner.

The common thread linking the three dimensions is the gap between system maturity and capacity maturity: reporting infrastructure, access channels, and compliance with formal audits are relatively well organized, but the impetus to bring channels to life, the procedural instruments for routine disputes, and the habit of processing complaints into knowledge still need to be built. Within the framework of Governance Theory (Stoker, 2002); (Pierre et al., 2001), this condition indicates that the institution has prepared the nodes of governance but has not yet fully activated the feedback relationships that make the governance network work to its full extent. Rather than being merely an obstacle, the ongoing institutional transformation opens a window of opportunity to restructure all three dimensions simultaneously, before old patterns harden once again into new habits that are difficult to change once the new institutional status is fully institutionalized.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of this study show that the maturity of the external complaint handling mechanism at the Kemendukbangga/BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Representative Office is uneven across the complaint management cycle, with a consistent pattern: the more formal and hierarchical a complaint channel is, the more mature its handling, while the more routine and horizontal a channel is, the more vulnerable it is to procedural gaps. Complaint channels are available through multiple routes, but their stimulation is weak because of low public participation and extremely minimal budgetary support, so the problem lies on the demand and resource side rather than in a scarcity of channels. Complaint handling is fully resolved and structured on the formal audit channel with no outstanding recommendations, but is vulnerable for routine complaints because of the absence of a dedicated SOP and the lack of provincial regulatory alignment following the institutional transformation. The analysis and utilization of complaints has only reached the stage of collecting feedback through the monthly satisfaction survey, without aggregation and analysis of technical complaint patterns that could become organizational learning.

These findings both reinforce and refine a number of previous studies. Whereas (Bewinda et al., 2024) and (Nurlinah et al., 2025) found that the availability of channels does not automatically produce utilization or participation, this study adds an explanation of the mechanisms behind it: budget limitations and the absence of an SOP on the non-formal channel, rather than merely low citizen interest, help explain why the available channels remain little used. Whereas (Khadijah et al., 2026) highlight the risk of a digital shock when control is tightened without friction management, the Bengkulu case shows an opposite pattern that is just as problematic: strong control on one channel (the formal audit) can work well without spilling over into another channel (routine complaints) that actually comes into contact with citizens more often. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that the complaint management framework is relevant for application in the domain of population data governance, while also revealing a distinctive pattern of split maturity in public sector institutions undergoing institutional transformation.

Practically, these findings point to three interrelated improvement measures: building an integrated digital complaint channel accompanied by adequate outreach and operational funding; drafting an SOP for handling external data disputes that is explicitly aligned with the post-transformation Kemendukbangga/BKKBN nomenclature; and institutionalizing periodic recapitulation and analysis of day-to-day technical complaints, so that feedback that has so far been resolved only case by case can be transformed into organizational knowledge that supports the continuous improvement of SIGA.

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, as a single case study, its findings are not intended to be statistically generalized, but to produce in-depth understanding whose transferability can be tested in comparable contexts. Second, the analysis in this article relies on in-depth interviews with two key informants from the internal side of the institution, namely the Accountability Division and the Public Information Disclosure Division, so the perspectives of external actors such as the Ombudsman, the DPRD, and the BPKP have not been directly captured through interviews and have for now only been reconstructed through document study. Third, the picture produced is cross-sectional, taken during the 2024-2026 institutional transition, and therefore cannot yet capture the dynamics after provincial regulations are actually aligned. Further research is recommended to complete the triangulation with direct interviews with external informants, to add a longitudinal dimension to capture changes after regulatory alignment, or to test the transferability of these findings at other Kemendukbangga/BKKBN provincial representative offices undergoing similar institutional transformation.

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