

The Role of the Merah Putih Village Cooperative in Improving Community Welfare in Pondok Petir, Depok

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the Merah Putih Village Cooperative (KDMP) in enhancing community welfare in Pondok Petir, Depok, West Java. A qualitative method was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the cooperative's functions and its socio-economic impact on the local community. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, with findings interpreted through the lenses of classical utilitarian welfare theory, neoclassical welfare theory, and the new contractarian approach. The results indicate that KDMP Pondok Petir, with 147 active members, supplies essential goods—such as rice, eggs, cooking oil, and mineral water—at prices below market rates. Sourcing rice directly from farmers in Cianjur shortens the supply chain, reduces intermediary margins, and creates dual benefits: affordable prices for consumers and improved market access for producers. Lower prices reduce household food expenditures, freeing up disposable income for education, healthcare, and savings; this enhances consumer utility and purchasing power, particularly amidst local inflation of approximately 3% per year in Depok. The study concludes that KDMP has positively contributed to community welfare by lowering food costs, improving market access for farmers, and strengthening public trust in cooperative institutions. However, the cooperative currently faces limitations regarding commodity variety and relies on manual bookkeeping. Strengthening institutional capacity, digitizing financial administration, and diversifying business activities are recommended to maximize KDMP's potential for fostering sustainable welfare improvements.

Keywords

Management, Merah Putih Village Cooperative, Community Welfare



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INTRODUCTION

Prabowo Subianto successfully secured the people's mandate and became the President-Elect of Indonesia for the 2024–2029 term. In leading Indonesia, President Prabowo has a vision known as *Asta Cita*, which encompasses the strengthening of ideology, national self-reliance, a people-centered economy, and the development of

human resources (HR). One of the key priorities emphasized by the government is improving community welfare. Within the context of President Prabowo's government programs, efforts to improve community welfare do not focus solely on economic aspects but also encompass human resource development through increased access to education, healthcare services, and the fulfillment of basic community needs.

Various priority programs promoted by the government, such as strengthening food security, providing nutritious meals for students, improving the quality of education and healthcare, and creating employment opportunities through industrial downstreaming and investment, are directed toward improving the overall quality of life of the population. These policies are expected to reduce poverty, narrow social inequality, and strengthen people's purchasing power, thereby creating more inclusive economic growth.

One of the government's populist programs that has already been implemented is the *Koperasi Desa Merah Putih* (KDMP), or the Red and White Village Cooperative. KDMP aims to revitalize the people's economy, empower Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), strengthen cooperatives, and promote rural development. One of the backbones of the people-centered economy is not necessarily large corporations or business activities in major cities, but rather the economic potential of rural communities.

The various government programs being implemented represent efforts to improve the welfare and standard of living of the Indonesian people. In 2026, the level of community welfare showed relatively positive developments. Several indicators determine the level of community welfare, including economic growth, poverty levels, per capita income, unemployment rates, access to education, healthcare, and social protection.

Based on data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), Indonesia's economic growth in the first quarter of 2026 reached 5.61% year-on-year (y-o-y), exceeding the 4.87% recorded during the same period of the previous year (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, n.d.). Another indicator demonstrating improvements in welfare is the condition of the labor market. In February 2026, the Open Unemployment Rate (Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka/TPT) stood at 4.68%, lower than in the previous period. The number of unemployed people was approximately 7.24 million, representing a decline compared with the previous period. The dominant employment sectors included agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, and industry. These three sectors absorbed 60.29% of the national workforce in February 2026

(Ekonomi Indonesia Resilien dan Tumbuh Solid pada Triwulan I-2026 – News and Press Release – BPS-Statistics Indonesia, n.d.).

However, there are also data indicating a contrasting condition regarding the welfare of Indonesian society. Overall, people's purchasing power has tended to decline amid uncertain global conditions. These circumstances have affected the prices of goods, although several economic indicators continue to show relatively favorable conditions.

This situation is indicated by the inflation rate in June 2026, which increased both monthly and annually, alongside a decline in the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI), although the index remained within the optimistic zone.

According to data released by Statistics Indonesia (BPS), Indonesia's inflation rate in June 2026 reached 0.44% on a monthly basis (month-to-month/mtm). Meanwhile, cumulative inflation since the beginning of the year (year-to-date/ytd) reached 1.79%, while annual inflation (year-on-year/yoy) stood at 3.34%. Compared with the conditions in May 2026, when monthly inflation was recorded at 0.28%, the inflation rate in June indicated increased pressure on the prices of goods and services consumed by the public. Based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) components, the expenditure group that contributed most significantly to the increase in inflation in June 2026 was the transportation sector, which recorded an inflation rate of 2.29%. This group contributed approximately 0.28 percentage points to overall monthly inflation. This condition indicates that rising transportation costs became one of the main factors driving price increases during the period and potentially affected people's purchasing power, particularly with regard to basic necessities and other household expenditures (CNBC Indonesia, n.d.).

The government's KDMP program, which was launched in 2025 and by 2026 had entered the implementation stage throughout Indonesia, was supported by a presidential instruction as a foundation for accelerating the establishment of 80,000 cooperatives across villages and urban wards throughout Indonesia. KDMP can be categorized as a multipurpose cooperative, namely a cooperative that engages in trading, savings and loans, marketing, services, and the provision of production facilities. One of the objectives of a multipurpose cooperative is to improve the welfare of its members. Cooperatives are expected to increase income, expand employment opportunities, strengthen the local economy, and enhance the competitiveness of members' businesses.

KDMP is therefore one of the government's efforts to improve the welfare of Indonesian society. One of the urban wards where a KDMP has begun to operate is

Pondok Petir. Pondok Petir is one of the urban wards located in Depok, West Java. Based on this background, the author is interested in examining the role of the Red and White Village Cooperative (KDMP) in improving community welfare in Pondok Petir, Depok.

METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method. This approach is applied to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon based on conditions occurring in the field. The approach aims to identify various events, behaviors, and experiences comprehensively by considering and taking into account the social context underlying them. The data collected consist of descriptive information that explains the research situation, including interview results, information provided by informants, documents, observation notes, and other relevant materials. Qualitative research does not focus solely on the final results but also considers the research process itself. Therefore, the stages of the research can be adjusted to field conditions and the development of information obtained during the study. This approach enables researchers to understand the meanings underlying each finding obtained from the research process.

Qualitative research is defined as a social science research method that collects and analyzes data in the form of words, both spoken and written, as well as human actions. Researchers do not attempt to quantify the data obtained; therefore, the research does not primarily produce numerical data or statistical figures (Citriadin Yudin, 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of KDMP in Pondok Petir, Depok, appears to be significant in improving the economic welfare of the local community through the provision of basic necessities, strengthening market access for farmers, and increasing institutional capacity. The cooperative, which has 147 active members, functions as a local economic institution that applies the principles of mutual cooperation and cooperatives, including joint ownership, benefit sharing, and member participation in decision-making. These principles create the potential for collective and sustainable socioeconomic impacts. Cooperatives have an important role in improving members' welfare by providing access to economic resources, strengthening business activities, and supporting local economic development (Agusalim et al., 2019; Sari et al., 2025).

KDMP Pondok Petir plays a role in distributing basic necessities and generating impacts on household welfare. Currently, KDMP provides essential commodities such as rice, eggs, cooking oil, and mineral water, including Cleo and Auviva brands. The provision of these goods directly reduces physical and economic barriers to access for members and surrounding communities. Relatively lower prices compared with conventional markets reduce household expenditure burdens, thereby potentially increasing disposable income and the ability to allocate resources to other needs, such as healthcare and education. From a microeconomic perspective, this phenomenon can be understood as an increase in consumer utility because essential goods can be obtained at lower prices, consistent with the principle of consumption efficiency. Cooperative institutions can contribute to welfare by improving access to goods and services while strengthening the purchasing capacity of their members (Solihin, 2023).

In particular, the stable purchasing pattern for eggs, including a regular customer who operates a bakery business and purchases approximately 2–6 trays every two days, indicates the cooperative's success in building local market trust and maintaining supply continuity. This condition reflects not only adequate stock availability and service quality but also supports the stability of cooperative revenues, which is important for operational sustainability. The presence of regular customers for egg commodities also indicates that the cooperative has been able to create sustainable consumer satisfaction. Regular purchases of 2–6 trays every two days indicate customer loyalty based on perceptions of product quality, competitive prices, and ease of access. From a utilitarian perspective, such loyalty can be interpreted as an indicator that the cooperative has successfully generated a high level of consumer satisfaction because customers continue to perceive greater benefits from purchasing through the cooperative.

Rice Supply Chain and the Cooperative's Function as a Producer–Consumer Link

The rice sold by KDMP is sourced directly from farmers in Cianjur at a price lower than the prevailing market price. This direct procurement model reduces the role of intermediaries and shortens the supply chain, allowing consumer prices to be reduced without necessarily compromising the feasibility of farmers' income, provided that contractual arrangements and price negotiations are conducted fairly. Thus, the cooperative performs a dual function: (1) providing farmers with market access and greater marketing certainty and (2) providing consumers with affordable goods. This function contributes to welfare at both ends of the local economic spectrum, namely producers and consumers, which is consistent with the fundamental objective of cooperatives as people-centered economic institutions (Agusalim et al., 2019; Mufiani, 2025).

From the perspective of neoclassical welfare theory, welfare improvement is not determined solely by individual satisfaction but also by the efficiency of economic resource allocation. Direct procurement of rice from farmers represents a form of distributional efficiency that can reduce transaction costs and shorten the supply chain. Such efficiency produces lower selling prices while strengthening the cooperative's competitiveness in comparison with traditional market traders. This finding indicates that the cooperative has the

potential to allocate resources more efficiently so that economic benefits can be experienced by both members and the wider community. Efficient cooperative management and business development are important factors in strengthening member welfare (Sari et al., 2025).

Professionalization of Financial Governance and Its Implications

At present, sales bookkeeping is still conducted manually. However, there are initiatives to improve institutional capacity through the participation of members and managers in training and seminars on general financial systems. The transition toward more professional bookkeeping, such as the implementation of computer-based accounting, double-entry bookkeeping, or simple accounting software, can strengthen transparency, accountability, and managerial analytical capabilities. Improvements in financial governance are important for minimizing financial leakages, strengthening member trust, and providing the data required for strategic decision-making, including inventory control, pricing, and business expansion. Sound financial management can enable cooperatives to increase their service capacity and potentially develop broader savings and loan programs or business investment activities. Strong governance, member participation, and managerial capacity are important elements in maintaining the sustainability of membership-based cooperatives (Magdalena et al., 2026).

Analysis Based on Welfare Theory (Albert and Hahnel in Darussalam)

Albert and Hahnel, as cited by Sari Meri and Enita Puspita (2018), classify welfare theory into three approaches: classical utilitarianism, neoclassical welfare theory, and the new contractarian approach. In the context of KDMP Pondok Petir, the classical utilitarian approach is relevant as an initial analytical framework because it emphasizes that welfare can be assessed through the level of individual satisfaction or utility, which increases when needs are fulfilled and pleasure is enhanced.

The classical utilitarian approach emphasizes that community welfare can be assessed based on the level of satisfaction or utility obtained by individuals. The greater the benefits perceived from an economic activity, the higher the level of welfare achieved. The existence of KDMP Pondok Petir provides direct benefits to the community through the provision of basic necessities at prices lower than those in conventional markets. Lower prices enable households to reduce their expenditures so that the remaining income can be allocated to other needs, such as education, healthcare, and savings. Consequently, community utility increases because households obtain greater economic benefits from the resources they possess. The role of cooperatives in providing economic benefits to members and strengthening household welfare is also supported by empirical research on Indonesian cooperatives (Agusalim et al., 2019).

The provision of goods at lower prices by KDMP increases consumers' purchasing satisfaction, representing an increase in utility that can be observed through household expenditure savings and greater convenience of access. Regular egg customers and the availability of rice supply indicate the formation of consumer preferences that lead to higher utility compared with alternative market options. In economic terms, consumers are more

likely to remain loyal when the benefits obtained from a transaction exceed those offered by alternative providers.

Classical utilitarianism also emphasizes behavior aimed at maximizing satisfaction within available resources. In practice, KDMP helps members and the community maximize utility by utilizing local resources, such as the availability of rice from farmers in Cianjur, and collective organizational structures to reduce transaction costs. The establishment of direct procurement practices and competitive pricing represents collective behavior directed toward maximizing member utility. This role is consistent with the broader function of cooperatives as collective economic institutions designed to improve members' access to goods, markets, and economic opportunities (Solihin, 2023).

Although classical utilitarian theory provides a useful framework for understanding the direct effects of cooperative activities on consumer satisfaction, welfare analysis of cooperatives also needs to consider other dimensions. The neoclassical and new contractarian approaches highlight issues such as efficient resource allocation under conditions of preferences and limited information. In addition, distributive justice and institutional legitimacy are also important. For example, ensuring that prices offered to farmers and consumers are fair requires contractual mechanisms and governance arrangements that consider economic reciprocity among actors. KDMP provides collective benefits that extend beyond consumer savings. By absorbing farmers' products, the cooperative can strengthen local food security, reduce local price fluctuations, and increase income stability for small-scale producers. The participation of 147 active members demonstrates the potential for mobilizing local resources for future collective activities, including savings and loan programs, joint business ventures, and productivity training.

The new contractarian approach views welfare as the outcome of institutions that are fair, participatory, and provide equal opportunities for members of society. In this context, KDMP Pondok Petir has demonstrated elements of this approach through its 147 active members. This membership reflects community participation in obtaining economic benefits collectively. Nevertheless, institutional development still needs to be strengthened. This can be achieved through the modernization of administrative systems, digitalization of bookkeeping, increased transparency of financial reporting, and expansion of business units. Such improvements can ensure that cooperative benefits are distributed more equitably among members. Member participation and business volume have been identified as important factors associated with cooperative members' welfare in Indonesia (Agusalim et al., 2019).

Analysis Based on the Inflation Rate in Depok City

The role of KDMP Pondok Petir becomes increasingly important when associated with the macroeconomic conditions of Depok City. The relatively stable inflation rate in Depok City at approximately 3% year-on-year in 2026 indicates that increases in the prices of goods and services remain relatively controlled. Nevertheless, inflation continues to exert pressure on purchasing power, particularly among lower-income households whose expenditure is largely

allocated to food. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data indicate that food commodities can significantly influence household expenditure. Strengthening local economic institutions that improve access to essential goods can therefore become an important mechanism for mitigating the effects of price increases.

In this context, Koperasi Desa Merah Putih Pondok Petir functions as a local economic mechanism that can help reduce the impact of inflation on the community. Although the cooperative does not yet sell all commodities contributing to inflation, such as shallots and red chili, it provides several essential goods that constitute important components of household expenditure, namely rice, eggs, cooking oil, and mineral water. Selling these commodities at prices lower than conventional market prices provides households with an alternative means of obtaining basic necessities more efficiently. Cooperatives can strengthen household purchasing power by facilitating access to goods and services and reducing economic barriers (Agusalim et al., 2019).

The strategy of procuring rice directly from farmers in Cianjur is an effective approach to reducing costs. By shortening the distribution chain, the cooperative can offer more competitive prices without reducing product quality. This mechanism is particularly important under inflationary conditions because it helps maintain household expenditure stability. Thus, even when the prices of certain commodities increase, cooperative members may still be able to meet their basic needs at relatively lower costs, thereby helping to preserve purchasing power.

Albert and Hahnel's welfare theory explains welfare in terms of the level of satisfaction obtained by individuals through the utilization of available resources. In this case, community members obtain greater satisfaction because they can purchase basic necessities at lower prices. Savings in household expenditure increase the ability of households to allocate income to other needs, including education, healthcare, and savings. Therefore, the cooperative does not merely function as a place for economic transactions but also serves as an instrument for improving welfare through increased consumer satisfaction. This interpretation is consistent with the utilitarian understanding of welfare, in which increased utility represents an important component of individual welfare (Sari Meri & Puspita, 2018).

From the perspective of neoclassical welfare theory, the cooperative's success in obtaining rice directly from farmers demonstrates greater efficiency in the allocation of economic resources. Distributional efficiency generates lower transaction costs, allowing the selling price to consumers to be reduced. This condition demonstrates that cooperatives can create welfare through more efficient market mechanisms while strengthening their competitiveness against conventional traders. Empirical evidence also indicates that cooperative business volume and organizational capacity are related to member welfare (Agusalim et al., 2019).

Thus, although inflation in Depok City remains relatively controlled, the existence of KDMP Pondok Petir continues to have a strategic role in maintaining community purchasing power. Through the provision of basic necessities at lower prices, efficient distribution chains,

and increased institutional capacity, the cooperative can increase community satisfaction while strengthening household economic resilience. The cooperative therefore functions not only as an economic institution but also as an instrument for community welfare development capable of responding to regional inflation dynamics.

****Analysis Based on Community Expenditure Levels****

Data on the expenditure of Depok City residents in 2025 indicate that average per capita expenditure reached approximately IDR 3,490,837 per month, consisting of food expenditure of IDR 1,244,367 (35.65%) and non-food expenditure of IDR 2,246,470 (64.35%). Based on Engel's Law, the proportion of household expenditure allocated to food tends to decline as income and welfare increase. Therefore, a lower food expenditure share can generally indicate greater economic capacity to allocate resources to non-food needs (Choi & Lee, 2019). This suggests that, in general, the people of Depok City have a relatively favorable level of welfare because a larger proportion of household expenditure is allocated to non-food needs, such as education, healthcare, transportation, communication, and household investment.

Nevertheless, food remains a significant component of expenditure, accounting for more than one-third of total household expenditure. This condition indicates that changes in food prices can still substantially affect purchasing power. In this situation, KDMP Pondok Petir has a strategic role as a local economic institution that helps maintain household expenditure stability by providing basic necessities at prices lower than those available in conventional markets. Cooperatives can contribute to household welfare by improving access to affordable goods and strengthening members' economic capacity (Agusalim et al., 2019).

The commodities marketed by the cooperative, namely rice, eggs, cooking oil, and mineral water, are basic necessities that are consumed regularly by households. Direct procurement of rice from farmers in Cianjur enables the cooperative to obtain lower acquisition costs, allowing selling prices to members and the wider community to remain competitive. In addition, the presence of regular customers purchasing eggs, with purchases of approximately 2–6 trays every two days, demonstrates that the cooperative has been able to fulfill consumer needs continuously through competitive prices and adequate product quality.

When associated with the expenditure structure of Depok City residents, the existence of the cooperative has the potential to reduce the proportion of household expenditure allocated to food. Savings obtained from purchasing basic necessities through the cooperative can be redirected toward non-food needs, such as children's education, healthcare services, savings, or family business development. Therefore, the cooperative not only helps people obtain goods at lower prices but also increases the flexibility of household financial management.

These findings are consistent with the welfare theory of Albert and Hahnel as cited in Darussalam (Sari Meri & Puspita, 2018). Under the classical utilitarian approach, welfare is measured according to the level of utility obtained by individuals from the use of available resources. Lower prices for basic necessities increase community utility because households

can obtain the same quantity of goods, or potentially more goods, with the same level of income. The resulting expenditure savings increase household economic satisfaction by creating greater financial space for fulfilling other needs that are also important to quality of life.

From the perspective of neoclassical welfare theory, efficiency is a major factor in improving welfare. The cooperative's strategy of purchasing rice directly from farmers represents supply-chain efficiency that reduces distribution and transaction costs. This efficiency results in lower selling prices compared with conventional markets, allowing economic benefits to be experienced by both consumers and producers. Farmers obtain improved market access, while consumers obtain more affordable prices. Consequently, the cooperative creates a more efficient allocation of resources and improves welfare for both parties.

Meanwhile, the new contractarian approach places institutional fairness and community participation at the center of welfare creation. Koperasi Desa Merah Putih Pondok Petir, with 147 active members, reflects community trust in an economic system based on mutual cooperation. Member participation provides not only economic benefits through access to more affordable goods but also strengthens social capital, increases local economic cooperation, and creates opportunities for the development of cooperative business units in the future. Cooperative institutions are particularly relevant to local economic empowerment because they combine economic objectives with collective participation and social functions (Mufiani, 2025).

Nevertheless, the cooperative's contribution to improving community welfare can still be optimized. The range of commodities currently marketed remains limited to several basic necessities, meaning that its impact on the overall household expenditure structure has not yet reached its maximum potential. In addition, the bookkeeping system remains in a transitional stage from manual recording toward more professional financial management, indicating that the cooperative's institutional capacity still needs to be strengthened. Modernization of administrative systems and digitalization of bookkeeping can improve operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability, thereby supporting the sustainability of cooperative businesses. Research on cooperative sustainability also emphasizes the importance of stronger governance, innovation capacity, and member participation (Magdalena et al., 2026).

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that Koperasi Desa Merah Putih Pondok Petir has made a positive contribution to improving community welfare by reducing the burden of household food expenditure. Although, at the macro level, the people of Depok City demonstrate a relatively favorable welfare condition, with non-food expenditure accounting for 64.35% of total expenditure, the existence of the cooperative remains important for maintaining purchasing power. Savings on food expenditure enable households to allocate income to more productive needs, thereby improving quality of life. By expanding commodity varieties, strengthening governance, and improving professional management, KDMP

Pondok Petir has the potential to make a greater contribution to sustainable community welfare.

Overall, the findings indicate that KDMP Pondok Petir has contributed to improving community welfare, particularly through reducing the cost of meeting basic needs, creating market access for farmers, and building public trust in cooperative institutions. Although administrative management remains in a transitional stage from manual systems toward more professional management, the efforts of cooperative managers to participate in financial management training demonstrate a commitment to improving governance quality. By strengthening institutional capacity, digitalizing financial systems, and diversifying business activities in the future, Koperasi Desa Merah Putih Pondok Petir has considerable potential to further improve the economic welfare of the community in a sustainable manner, consistent with the principles of welfare theory and the broader objectives of cooperative development (Agusalim et al., 2019; Mufiani, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The operational limitations of KDMP Pondok Petir include its relatively narrow scope of services, as the cooperative currently focuses primarily on trading activities and the collection of agricultural products from farmers, while financial services such as business loans for members and other productive services have not yet been developed. In addition, its administrative capacity and information systems remain limited, as financial and operational records are still maintained manually, creating potential risks of bookkeeping errors, limited transparency, and insufficient data availability for managerial analysis and strategic decision-making. Furthermore, a proper balance between the interests of consumers and producers needs to be ensured so that direct procurement practices do not disadvantage small-scale farmers. Therefore, strengthening the cooperative's operational capacity, expanding its business and financial services, implementing more effective digital information systems, and establishing fair procurement mechanisms are important steps to ensure that KDMP can provide sustainable benefits to both consumers and producers.

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