

Community Participation And Village Head Leadership In Village Fund Management In Baru Sungai Sakai Village, Tiang Pumpung District, Merangin Regency, Jambi Province

Reiny Erica Sonia¹, Sri Rahayu², Rico Wijaya Z³

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Jambi, Jambi Province, Indonesia

**Corresponding author: reinyericasonia@gmail.com*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of community participation and village head leadership on village fund management in Baru Sungai Sakai Village, Tiang Pumpung District, Merangin Regency, Jambi Province. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey method using a questionnaire. The study sample consisted of 132 heads of families selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1–5 that measured three main variables: community participation, village head leadership, and village fund management. The results showed that community participation was still relatively low, especially in the decision-making and program evaluation stages. The village head's leadership was also not yet effective, as reflected in low transparency, weak communication, and limited participation opportunities opened by the village head. These two factors together contributed to the suboptimal management of village funds in accordance with the mandate of applicable regulations.

Keywords: Community Participation, Village Head Leadership, Village Fund Management, Questionnaire Survey

INTRODUCTION

In Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, a village is defined as a legal community unit that has territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and manage the interests of the local community, based on local origins and customs that are recognized and respected in the Government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

In accordance with the autonomy granted to villages, village governments have the authority to regulate household and government affairs, as stipulated in Law No. 23 of 2014 and Government Regulation No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. This decentralization policy has touched the lowest level of government, namely the village, requiring villages to manage resources independently and accountably.

One of the government's strategies to encourage village independence is through the provision of village funds. According to Government Regulation No. 43 of 2015, village funds are funds sourced from the State Budget (APBN), transferred through the Regency/City Regional Budget (APBD) and used to finance governance, development, community development, and community empowerment.

The success of village fund management is heavily influenced by two main factors: community participation and village head leadership. Community participation is essential to ensure that planned programs truly meet the real needs of residents, while effective village head leadership is essential to ensure transparent, accountable, and participatory management.

However, in Baru Sungai Sakai Village, Tiang Pumpung District, Merangin Regency, both community participation and the village head's leadership in managing village funds are still suboptimal. This condition has the potential to hinder the achievement of village development goals as mandated by Law No. 6 of 2014. Based on this, this study aims to empirically analyze the level of community participation and the effectiveness of the village head's leadership in managing village funds in Baru Sungai Sakai Village.

Village funds have become a critical instrument in the national strategy to accelerate rural development and reduce socioeconomic disparities between urban and rural areas. Since their introduction through Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, the allocation of village funds has increased significantly from year to year. In 2015, the national village fund allocation reached IDR 20.7 trillion, rising to IDR 72 trillion by 2020, reflecting the government's strong commitment to village-centered development. However, the increase in funding has not always been accompanied by a proportional improvement in management quality, which remains a persistent challenge across many villages in Indonesia, including in Merangin Regency.

Several studies have documented that the quality of village fund management is closely tied to the degree of community involvement and the style of local leadership. Suharto (2010) noted that development programs that fail to engage the community from the planning stage tend to produce outputs that do not reflect the actual needs of the population. Similarly, Rivai and Mulyadi (2012) argued that a village head who exercises democratic and participatory leadership is better positioned to harness the collective

intelligence of the community, resulting in more effective and sustainable development outcomes. These theoretical insights underscore the importance of examining both participation and leadership as determinants of village fund management quality.

Baru Sungai Sakai Village is one of the villages in Tiang Pumpung District, Merangin Regency, Jambi Province, that receives annual village fund allocations from the central government. Like many rural villages in Indonesia, it faces structural challenges including a predominantly agricultural economy, limited access to formal education, and a historically low culture of civic participation in formal governance processes. Preliminary observations conducted by the researchers indicated that village deliberation meetings (*musyawarah desa*) were often attended by a small fraction of eligible residents, and that village fund expenditure reports were not consistently disseminated to the public. These conditions motivate the need for a systematic empirical study to diagnose the root causes of suboptimal village fund management in this specific context.

This study therefore seeks to fill an empirical gap in the literature on village fund governance in Jambi Province by addressing three specific research questions: (1) How is the level of community participation in village fund management in Baru Sungai Sakai Village?; (2) How effective is the village head's leadership in managing village funds?; and (3) Is there a significant relationship between community participation, village head leadership, and village fund management outcomes? The answers to these questions are expected to provide an evidence-based foundation for policy recommendations directed at improving village governance in the study area and in comparable rural contexts across Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of Community Participation

Participation is the active involvement of an individual or group in an activity, decision-making process, program implementation, and evaluation to achieve a shared goal. Participation demonstrates community involvement in the form of ideas, energy, time, skills, and materials.

According to Cohen and Uphoff (1977), community participation in development is divided into four stages: (1) Participation in decision-making; (2) Participation in implementation; (3) Participation in enjoying the results; and (4) Participation in evaluation. These four stages form the basis for measuring the level of community participation in this study.

Participation is influenced by internal factors (age, education, occupation, income) and external factors (government role, socialization, support from community leaders).

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According to Angell (2013), education is an absolute requirement for participation because the higher a person's education, the easier it is for them to understand and actively participate in development activities.

Tjokroamidjodjo (1974) further categorizes community participation into two major forms: direct participation, in which community members are personally involved in planning and implementation activities, and indirect participation, in which community members contribute through financial support, donations in kind, or the delegation of representatives. In the context of village fund management, direct participation is considered more substantive because it gives community members first-hand influence over the direction and priorities of development programs. Slamet (2003) also emphasizes that genuine participation must be voluntary, self-initiated, and driven by an internalized sense of responsibility rather than external compulsion.

Mubyarto (1984) defines community participation as the willingness and ability of a community to support the success of development programs consistently and in a self-reliant manner. This definition highlights two indispensable dimensions: willingness, which relates to motivation and awareness, and ability, which relates to knowledge, skills, and resources. In agrarian communities such as Baru Sungai Sakai Village, structural barriers — including limited literacy, geographic isolation, and socioeconomic marginalization — can significantly inhibit both the willingness and the ability of residents to engage meaningfully in village governance processes. Sunarti (2003) adds that promoting genuine participation requires deliberate and sustained efforts by local government to create accessible and inclusive spaces for community engagement.

2. Village Head Leadership Concept

Leadership is a person's ability to influence, motivate, and direct others in achieving common goals (Robbins, 2003). In the context of village governance, the leadership of the village head is a crucial factor in determining the direction and quality of village fund management.

Yukl (2010) defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively, and facilitating individual and collective efforts to achieve shared goals. Effective village head leadership is measured through five indicators: (1) transparency and accountability; (2) communication skills; (3) innovation and creativity; (4) ability to build trust; and (5) participatory and inclusive nature.

Bass and Avolio (1994) introduced the concept of transformational leadership as a model particularly relevant to public sector contexts. Transformational leaders inspire

followers by articulating a compelling vision, modeling integrity, and stimulating intellectual growth among their constituents. In the village governance context, a transformational village head is one who not only administers village funds according to regulations but also motivates the community to actively participate in shaping the village's development agenda. This stands in contrast to transactional leadership, which operates primarily through reward-and-compliance mechanisms and tends to be less effective in building sustained community engagement.

Siagian (2002) further emphasizes that effective leaders in public administration must demonstrate a strong commitment to accountability, defined as the obligation to report, explain, and bear responsibility for the consequences of their decisions and actions. In village governance, accountability is operationalized through the timely publication of village fund plans and realization reports, the conduct of open and transparent deliberations, and the willingness to receive and act upon community feedback. Davis (1981) similarly argues that leadership effectiveness is fundamentally determined by the degree to which a leader can build mutual trust and respect between the governing body and the governed community — a condition that is prerequisite for effective participatory governance.

3. Village Funds

Village funds are funds sourced from the State Budget (APBN) allocated for villages and transferred through the Regency/City Regional Budget (PP No. 43 of 2015). Village funds are used to finance governance, development, community development, and village community empowerment. Village fund management must adhere to the principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and budgetary discipline.

The management cycle of village funds encompasses four interrelated stages: (1) planning (*perencanaan*), which includes the formulation of the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) and the Annual Village Work Plan (RKPDDes); (2) implementation (*pelaksanaan*), which covers the actual expenditure of funds for approved programs; (3) reporting and accountability (*penatausahaan dan pertanggungjawaban*), which involves the preparation of financial reports and their submission to the relevant authorities; and (4) supervision (*pengawasan*), which entails monitoring by both government inspectors and the community to ensure that funds are used as intended. According to Pangestu (1995), effective management at each of these stages requires not only technical competence from village administrators but also active engagement and oversight from the broader community.

Isbandi Rukminto Adi (2007) argues that village fund management must be understood not merely as a bureaucratic and financial exercise but as a participatory governance process that empowers local communities to take ownership of their development outcomes. From this perspective, the quality of village fund management is not measured solely by compliance with technical regulations but also by the extent to which the fund utilization reflects the genuine priorities of the community, contributes to sustainable improvements in community welfare, and is conducted in a manner that strengthens local institutional capacity. This broader conception of management quality provides the normative framework within which the present study evaluates village fund governance in Baru Sungai Sakai Village.

4. Relationship between Variables

Effective village fund management is the result of a synergy between active community participation and effective village head leadership. Democratic and communicative leadership will foster community trust, encouraging them to actively participate in village fund management. Conversely, closed leadership will weaken participation and reduce the effectiveness of village fund use. This aligns with Putnam's (1993) theory of social capital, which states that the trust built by effective leaders strengthens the community's collective capacity to manage public resources.

RESEARCH METHODS

Types and Approaches of Research

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey method. This quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to analyze and empirically measure the level of community participation and the effectiveness of village head leadership in managing village funds in Baru Sungai Sakai Village. According to Sugiyono (2019), the survey method is used to obtain data from specific, natural locations by distributing questionnaires, conducting structured interviews, and so on.

Location and Time of Research

This research was conducted in Baru Sungai Sakai Village, Tiang Pumpung District, Merangin Regency, Jambi Province. The location was chosen based on the consideration that the village is one of the recipients of village funds and still faces the problem of low community participation and suboptimal leadership of the village head in managing village funds.

Population and Sample

The population in this study was all the people who live in Baru Sungai Sakai Village. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error rate, resulting in a sample of 132 heads of families. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) heads of families who have lived in Baru Sungai Sakai Village for at least 1 year; (2) at least 17 years old or married; and (3) willing to be research respondents.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection in this study was conducted through a structured questionnaire administered directly to 132 heads of families as respondents. The questionnaire was compiled based on indicators from three research variables: community participation, village head leadership, and village fund management.

The questionnaire used a Likert scale with five answer options: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Before use, the questionnaire was first tested for validity and reliability. Validity testing was carried out using Pearson Product Moment correlation, while reliability testing used Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with a minimum reliability limit of 0.60.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections: (1) Respondent identity; (2) Statements regarding community participation (20 items); (3) Statements regarding village head leadership (20 items); and (4) Statements regarding village fund management (15 items).

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the frequency distribution, percentage, mean, and standard deviation of each variable. Spearman's rank correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to test the relationships between variables. All data processing was performed using SPSS version 25 software.

The categorization of respondents' answer scores refers to the following Likert scale value ranges: 1.00 – 1.80 (Very Low/Very Poor); 1.81 – 2.60 (Low/Poor); 2.61 – 3.40 (Fair); 3.41 – 4.20 (High/Good); 4.21 – 5.00 (Very High/Very Good).

Operational Definition of Variables***a. Community Participation (X_1)***

Community participation is the active involvement of heads of families in the village fund management process, which is measured through four indicators: (1) involvement in

decision-making/planning; (2) involvement in program implementation; (3) utilization of program results; and (4) involvement in program evaluation.

b. Village Head Leadership (X_2)

Village head leadership is the community's assessment of the village head's ability to lead the management of village funds, which is measured through five indicators: (1) transparency and accountability; (2) communication skills; (3) innovation and creativity; (4) ability to build trust; and (5) participatory and inclusive nature.

c. Village Fund Management (Y)

Village fund management is the respondents' assessment of the quality of village fund management in Baru Sungai Sakai Village, which is measured through four aspects: (1) planning; (2) implementation; (3) reporting and accountability; and (4) supervision.

	31–50 years	77	58.3
	> 50 years	27	20.5
Gender	Male	98	74.2
	Female	34	25.8
Education	Elementary / Junior High School	16	12.1
	Junior–Senior High School	82	62.1
	Diploma/University	34	25.8
Occupation	Farmer	65	49.2
	Trader/Entrepreneur	28	21.2
	Day Laborer	24	18.2
	Civil Servant/Other	15	11.4
Total		132	100

The respondents in this study were 132 heads of families. Based on data collected through questionnaires, the majority of respondents were in the 31–50 age group (58.3%), male (74.2%), and had a junior high school–high school education (62.1%). In terms of occupation, the majority of respondents worked as farmers (49.2%), followed by traders/entrepreneurs (21.2%), and day laborers (18.2%).

The dominance of respondents in the productive age range of 31–50 years (58.3%) suggests that the community possesses a sizeable active workforce capable of engaging in village development activities. However, the relatively low educational attainment — with 62.1% having only a junior high school to high school education — is a significant contextual factor. This is consistent with Angell's (2013) argument that educational level directly influences a person's capacity to understand administrative processes and to engage meaningfully in participatory governance. The predominance of farmers (49.2%) as the main occupational group also indicates that economic activities are highly time-sensitive and seasonal, which may limit the availability of respondents to attend planning deliberations or monitoring activities outside of agricultural cycles. These sociodemographic characteristics must be taken into account when interpreting the levels of participation and governance quality found in this study.

2. Level of Community Participation in Village Fund Management

Based on the analysis of questionnaire data from 132 respondents, the average community participation score was 2.43 (Low category). Of the four participation indicators according to Cohen and Uphoff, involvement in decision-making received the lowest score (average 2.12), followed by involvement in evaluation (2.35), utilization of results (2.61), and program implementation (2.64).

Low participation at the decision-making stage indicates that the community has not been optimally involved in village planning deliberations. This situation impacts the relevance of implemented programs to the community's real needs.

A deeper analysis of the participation indicators reveals a consistent pattern: community engagement is stronger in the implementation and benefit-utilization stages — where participation is largely passive and receptive — and weakest in the decision-making and evaluation stages, which require active, informed, and assertive involvement. This asymmetry suggests that the community of Baru Sungai Sakai Village has been positioned primarily as a recipient rather than an agent of development. Supriyadi (2010) describes this phenomenon as “mobilized participation,” in which communities participate in activities organized by the government but have little genuine voice in shaping those activities. Such a model of participation is insufficient to ensure that village fund allocations are genuinely responsive to community needs and priorities.

Field observations and responses to open-ended questionnaire items further indicate that many respondents were unaware of the dates and agendas of village deliberation meetings (musyawarah desa), or felt that their attendance was neither actively solicited nor consequential to the outcomes. Several respondents noted that meetings were held on short

notice and at times inconvenient for working-age farmers. This finding resonates with Isbandi Rukminto Adi's (2007) warning that formal participatory mechanisms can become "ritualistic" exercises if they are not accompanied by genuine efforts to mobilize, inform, and empower community members. Addressing these barriers is essential to elevating the quality of participation — and by extension, the quality of village fund management — in Baru Sungai Sakai Village.

3. Effectiveness of Village Head Leadership

The questionnaire analysis results showed that the average village head leadership score was 2.51 (Low category). The transparency and accountability indicator received the lowest score (average 2.21), followed by the ability to build trust (2.38), communication skills (2.52), participatory and inclusive nature (2.64), and innovation and creativity (2.72).

The low transparency score indicates that the community feels they haven't received sufficient information regarding the planned and actual use of village funds. This condition aligns with Watson's findings in Soetomo (2008), which found that weak transparency in village government creates dependency and hinders active citizen participation.

The second-lowest indicator, the ability to build trust (average 2.38), reflects a broader concern about the quality of the relationship between the village head and the community. Trust is a foundational element of effective public governance; as Davis (1981) argues, without mutual trust between leaders and community members, the cooperative behavior necessary for successful collective action cannot be sustained. In the context of Baru Sungai Sakai Village, the low trust scores suggest that residents perceive the village head as insufficiently responsive to their aspirations and concerns. This perception is reinforced by the weak communication scores (average 2.52), indicating that the village head has not established regular, two-way channels of communication through which community members can receive information and provide feedback on village fund management.

The relatively higher scores on innovation and creativity (2.72) and participatory and inclusive nature (2.64) suggest that the village head demonstrates some openness to new ideas and community input, but that these inclinations have not yet translated into sustained institutional practices. Bass and Avolio (1994) note that transformational leadership requires not only the personal vision to innovate but also the consistent organizational commitment to create structures through which community ideas are collected, evaluated, and incorporated into decision-making. The present findings suggest a gap between the village head's dispositional orientation and the institutional practices that would make

participatory governance a reliable and routine feature of village fund management in Baru Sungai Sakai Village.

4. Village Fund Management

The average village fund management score from the questionnaire was 2.58 (Low category). The reporting and accountability aspect received the highest score (2.89), while the community oversight aspect received the lowest score (2.19). This indicates that administrative procedures are in place, but community involvement in oversight remains very limited.

The relatively higher score on the reporting and accountability dimension (2.89) reflects the fact that the village government has, to a degree, fulfilled its formal obligations to submit financial reports to the regency government. However, this form of upward accountability — directed toward higher-level authorities — does not necessarily indicate that the village government is equally accountable to the community it serves. True accountability in village governance, as defined by Suharto (2010), requires that village officials present financial information to the public in an accessible and comprehensible format and that they create mechanisms for community members to raise questions, register concerns, and demand corrective action. The present data suggest that this dimension of downward accountability remains underdeveloped in Baru Sungai Sakai Village.

The critically low score on community oversight (2.19) deserves particular attention, as community oversight represents the primary safeguard against misuse or misappropriation of village funds. Regulation of the Minister of Finance Number 93/PMK.07/2015 explicitly mandates that village communities have the right and responsibility to monitor the use of village funds and to report irregularities to the relevant authorities. Yet the data indicate that this mandate is largely unfulfilled in practice. Respondents reported limited access to village fund expenditure documents, infrequent holding of accountability meetings (*musyawarah pertanggungjawaban*), and a general absence of easily accessible information channels through which oversight could be exercised. This finding underscores the importance of strengthening both the supply of transparency by the village government and the capacity of the community to exercise meaningful oversight of village fund use.

5. Relationship between Community Participation, Village Head Leadership, and Village Fund Management

Table 2. Correlation and Regression Results

Variable	r value	Category	Sig.
Community Participation → Village Fund Management	0.642	Strong	Significant
Village Head Leadership → Village Fund Management	0.718	Strong	Significant
R ² (Combined)	0.613	—	—

The results of the correlation analysis show that community participation (X_1) has a positive and significant correlation with village fund management (Y) with an r value of 0.642 (strong). Village head leadership (X_2) also has a positive and significant correlation with village fund management (Y) with an r value of 0.718 (strong). Simultaneously, the two independent variables contribute 61.3% to the variability of village fund management ($R^2 = 0.613$).

This finding confirms Putnam's (1993) social capital theory that trust built by effective leaders strengthens the collective capacity of the community to engage in the management of public resources, including village funds.

The higher correlation coefficient of village head leadership ($r = 0.718$) compared to community participation ($r = 0.642$) suggests that the village head's leadership style is a slightly stronger predictor of village fund management quality in this context. This finding is theoretically consistent: in settings where community participation is structurally constrained by low educational attainment, limited civic experience, and weak institutional norms of engagement, the role of local leadership becomes disproportionately decisive. A village head who actively creates conditions for participation — through transparent communication, inclusive deliberation, and visible accountability — can, to a significant extent, compensate for these structural deficits by stimulating a culture of civic engagement and mutual responsibility.

The combined explanatory power of the two variables ($R^2 = 0.613$) indicates that community participation and village head leadership together account for approximately 61.3% of the variance in village fund management quality, leaving 38.7% attributable to other factors not included in this study. These may include the technical capacity of village

apparatus, the quality of supervision from the regency government, the regulatory framework and its enforcement, as well as community-level social norms and organizational density. Future research should explore these additional determinants to build a more comprehensive model of village fund governance. Nonetheless, the present findings provide robust empirical evidence that strengthening both community participation and village head leadership is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for improving village fund management in Baru Sungai Sakai Village and in comparable rural communities across Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First: the level of community participation in Baru Sungai Sakai Village is still relatively low (average score 2.43), especially at the decision-making and evaluation stages of the village fund program.

Second: the village head's leadership has not been running effectively (average score 2.51), with transparency and accountability indicators as the weakest aspects.

Third: village fund management is still not optimal (average score 2.58), especially in terms of community oversight.

Fourth, there is a positive and significant correlation between community participation ($r=0.642$) and village head leadership ($r=0.718$) and village fund management. Both variables simultaneously contribute 61.3% to village fund management.

Fifth: the administrative procedural management of village funds has referred to the applicable regulations, but substantially has not fulfilled the participatory principles as mandated by Law Number 6 of 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions above, the suggestions that can be conveyed are:

Improving leadership capacity: Village heads need to participate in leadership training based on transparency, public communication, and participatory approaches facilitated by the Merangin District Government.

Strengthening transparency: Village heads are required to ensure that information on plans and the realization of village fund use is widely disseminated through information boards, community meetings, and easily accessible communication media.

Inclusive deliberation: The village deliberation process must involve all levels of society including women, youth, and vulnerable groups from all hamlets.

Increasing community literacy: There is a need for a program to increase community capacity regarding village fund management through the formation of Village Community Empowerment Cadres (KPMD).

Periodic monitoring: The Merangin Regency Government needs to conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of village head leadership and the level of community participation in managing village funds.

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Legislation



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