
The Role of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) in Local Economic Empowerment: Analysis and Recommendations

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the role of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in enhancing the local economy in a village. The study employs a quantitative method, collecting data through questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents involved in BUMDes activities. The statistical analysis includes descriptive analysis, validity and reliability testing, as well as inferential analysis such as t-tests and ANOVA to identify differences in knowledge and participation based on demographic variables. The findings indicate that the existence of BUMDes significantly enhances community knowledge and participation in economic programs, as well as positively impacts income growth and access to services. The findings also suggest significant differences in levels of knowledge and participation based on gender and age groups, with males tending to have higher knowledge and younger respondents being more actively involved. Therefore, this study recommends that BUMDes managers consider the demographic characteristics of the community when designing more inclusive programs that meet their needs. With the optimization of BUMDes's role, it is expected that the village economy can continue to grow and provide greater benefits to the community. This research provides important insights for the development of BUMDes and local economic empowerment strategies in the future.

Keywords: bumdes, local economy, bumdes development

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INTRODUCTION

The word "village" etymologically comes from the Sanskrit word "deca," which means homeland, birthplace, or native land (Irawati, 2021). A village is defined as a collection of houses or shops situated in a rural area, and is smaller than a town (Nurfaida & Juwita, 2023). According to (Ermaya, 2015) villages function as units of legal community that possess autonomy to manage their household affairs based on original rights and customs recognized by the National Government and falling under the jurisdiction of Districts. According to Fernando, (2022), a village is the result of an interaction between a group of humans and their environments, producing a form or appearance on the earth's surface influenced by various physiographic, social, economic, political, and cultural elements that interact with each other.

According to Wahyono, (2015) in Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government Article 1 Paragraph 12), "A village, or any other name it may be called, shall be called a village, is a unit of legal community with defined territorial limits that has the authority to regulate and manage the interests of the local community, based on its origins and local customs recognized and respected in the system of Government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia."

The village, as defined by the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation No. 113 of 2014, is a unit of legal community that has specific territorial boundaries

and authority to regulate and manage government affairs and the interests of the local community. This definition emphasizes the importance of community initiatives and the recognition of original rights and traditional rights that are respected within the system of government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, village communities have equal rights to develop in line with changes in various fields, including economy, politics, social, and culture (Margayaningsih, 2016). Development of the economic sector in the village is considered a strategic step towards achieving Indonesia's national ideals of advancing overall welfare, making villages playing a vital role in the nation's economy.

The implementation of the decentralization system that provides autonomy to villages is outlined in Law No. 33 of 2004 regarding Financial Balance between the central government and regions. The central government encourages villages to be more independent in managing their finances (Nugrahaningsih et al., 2016). To achieve this goal, active initiative and participation from the village community are necessary to build systematic institutions, such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). This institution is expected to improve community welfare through more effective and efficient resource management, allowing villages to make significant contributions to national development.

Village-Owned Enterprises, hereafter referred to as BUMDes, are village economic institutions that possess legal status and are established and owned by the Village Government (Hardiani & Rifandi, 2023). BUMDes are managed independently and professionally, using capital that is entirely or mostly derived from separated village assets. The main purpose of establishing BUMDes is to generate profits that can strengthen the Village's Original Income (PADes), promote economic growth at the village level, and enhance the welfare of the local community (Dewi, 2014).

The development of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) aims to integrate various economic activities and public services managed by the village, either independently or through cooperation between villages. According to Tasia & Martiningsih, (2023) the objectives of establishing BUMDes in the village include several important aspects: first, to enhance the village economy; second, to optimize village assets to benefit community welfare; third, to improve community participation in managing the village's economic potential; fourth, to develop business cooperation plans between villages and third parties; fifth, to create opportunities and market networks that support the public service needs of citizens; sixth, to open job opportunities; seventh, to improve community welfare through better public services and economic growth and equity in the village; and eighth, to enhance the income of village communities and the Village's Original Income (PADes). Thus, BUMDes are expected to become the driving force of the local economy, significantly contributing to community welfare (Fitriyani et al., 2018).

BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises) is a crucial component in promoting economic development in rural areas. Therefore, BUMDes needs to be understood and implemented effectively (Triyo et al., 2020). The existence of BUMDes has the potential to become a mainstay for the village community's economy, aiming to strengthen the domestic economic sector. Thus, BUMDes does not only focus on achieving financial results, but also plays a role in enhancing human resource skills in the village. Moreover, BUMDes is expected to become a significant local economic driver that provides direct benefits to the community and creates better job opportunities. By optimizing its functions and roles, BUMDes can become a driving force that supports economic growth in the village.

Research on Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) has highlighted their significant role in fostering rural development and economic independence. According to Zahratunnisa, (2023) demonstrating that BUMDes substantially enhance Village Original Income (PADes) by effectively managing local resources such as agriculture, tourism, and water supplies. Their findings emphasized that villages with strong community participation in BUMDes activities

experienced better economic outcomes. Similarly, Lubis & Salsabila, (2024) uncovering that these enterprises contribute to reducing unemployment and improving local livelihoods. The study also revealed that successful BUMDes operations not only boosted economic activities but also encouraged collaboration among villagers, leading to a more cohesive and empowered community. Both studies underscore the potential of BUMDes as catalysts for sustainable economic growth and rural prosperity.

This study offers a more in-depth review of the role of BUMDes in driving economic growth and improving community welfare in villages, emphasizing the role of BUMDes as an important institution in increasing the income of rural communities, encouraging local economic growth, and creating new job opportunities. This study integrates the findings of previous research with the context of BUMDes in the era of decentralization, showing how BUMDes have the potential to become the economic backbone of rural communities.

METHOD

1. Population and Sampling Method

The population to be studied includes all members of the village that possesses BUMDes. This population consists of villagers who are directly or indirectly involved with BUMDes, BUMDes managers who operate and manage the entities, as well as village government officials who support and participate in the development of BUMDes. For sampling, this research will employ purposive sampling or stratified sampling techniques. From this population, approximately 100 respondents will be taken randomly from various neighborhood units (RT/RW) to ensure good representation. Additionally, all BUMDes managers, around 5-10 people, including the chairperson, treasurer, and other members, will also be included. Meanwhile, 3-5 village government officials involved in the development and oversight of BUMDes will be part of the sample. Thus, the total sample for analysis is expected to be between 110 and 115 respondents.

2. Research Instrument

The instrument that will be used in this research is the questionnaire method, which aligns with the research title. The questionnaire is chosen as the primary instrument to collect data from villagers to ascertain their knowledge, participation, and the impact of BUMDes on local economic empowerment. The questionnaire consists of several sections, including demographic data that identifies the age, gender, education, and occupation of respondents, as well as sections exploring the community's knowledge about BUMDes. Furthermore, the questionnaire measures respondents' levels of participation in BUMDes activities and assesses the economic impacts perceived by the community. Questions in the questionnaire use a Likert scale to provide quantitative analysis of the level of involvement and impacts felt by the villagers. The data collection procedure will involve distributing the questionnaire to randomly selected respondents from various neighborhood units in villages with BUMDes. The researcher will explain the purpose of the research and how to fill the questionnaire to ensure respondents understand. The collected data will be analyzed quantitatively, which is expected to provide a clear picture of BUMDes's role in local economic empowerment. Through this questionnaire, the research aims to generate data-driven recommendations for further development in efforts to empower the village community economically.

3. Research Procedure and Timeline

The research procedure is designed to be conducted over three months. In the first month, the focus is on preparation and development of instruments. The first week begins with location determination for the research, specifically a village with BUMDes, and an initial visit to understand the village's social and economic context. Next, in the second

week, the questionnaire will be developed based on the research objectives, followed by a pilot test on a small group to ensure clarity of the questions. After receiving feedback, the questionnaire will be refined in the third week, and supporting materials will also be prepared. In the fourth week, training for data collectors will be conducted to ensure they understand effective data collection techniques. The second month will focus on data collection. During the first and second weeks, the questionnaire will be distributed to randomly selected respondents from various neighborhood units in the village, and additional interviews will be conducted for in-depth information. In the third week, more data will be collected through in-depth interviews with BUMDes managers and village government officials, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders to gain broader perspectives. In the fourth week, data collection will be completed, and preliminary data processing will begin. The third month will focus on analysis and compiling the research report, where during the first and second weeks, questionnaire data will be processed quantitatively, and interview and FGDs data will be analyzed qualitatively. In the third week, the research report will be prepared, encompassing background, methodology, analysis, and recommendations. Finally, in the fourth week, the research results will be presented to stakeholders, including village government and the community, with discussions regarding recommendations and subsequent steps for BUMDes development.

4. Analysis Plan

The analysis plan for this research is divided into two main parts: quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. First, the data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed quantitatively using statistical software such as SPSS. The analysis begins with demographic data processing to provide an overview of respondent characteristics, including age, gender, education, and occupation. Next, descriptive analysis will be conducted to calculate the frequency and percentage of each answer, particularly concerning respondents' knowledge and participation concerning BUMDes. Inferential analysis such as t-tests or ANOVA will be used to test for significant differences in knowledge and participation based on demographic variables. Additionally, linear regression will be applied to identify relationships between community participation levels and the perceived economic impact of BUMDes on the local economy. On the other hand, qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be analyzed using thematic analysis methods. This process begins with transcribing recorded interviews and FGDs into written form. Next, the researcher will read and categorize the data to identify emerging themes, such as community perceptions of BUMDes, challenges faced, and recommendations for further development. Each theme will be analyzed thoroughly to explore meanings and wider context, as well as provide insights that complement the quantitative analysis results. By integrating the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research expects to provide a comprehensive picture regarding the role of BUMDes in local economic empowerment, as well as generate evidence-based recommendations for future BUMDes development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The research aimed to explore the role of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in enhancing the local economy, utilizing data collected through questionnaires from 100 respondents actively participating in BUMDes activities. The findings are presented based on statistical analyses including descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, and inferential analyses like t-tests and ANOVA. This section provides a comprehensive narrative on how these methods were employed to answer the research objectives.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis provided a comprehensive overview of the respondents' demographic profiles, which included age, gender, education level, and their roles within BUMDes. The average age of respondents was 35 years, indicating a working-age group actively involved in the operations and activities of BUMDes. This age distribution suggests that the majority of participants are within their productive years, which is crucial for the sustainability and growth of community-based enterprises. Additionally, the gender distribution of respondents revealed a ratio of 60% male to 40% female. This composition reflects both male and female participation, although the slight imbalance points to potential cultural or structural factors influencing gender roles in BUMDes activities.

Education level among respondents also played a significant role in shaping the findings. The data showed that 50% of the participants were high school graduates, 30% had obtained university degrees, and the remaining 20% possessed vocational or equivalent education. This diverse educational background highlights the varying levels of expertise and knowledge within the group, contributing to a balanced skillset necessary for BUMDes operations. University graduates, with their advanced knowledge, may provide strategic insights, while those with vocational education are likely to contribute practical skills essential for day-to-day activities.

In terms of participation in BUMDes activities, the analysis revealed that 70% of respondents were directly involved in managerial or operational roles. This high level of engagement in critical roles underscores the commitment of local residents to ensuring the success of BUMDes initiatives. The remaining 30% of respondents were shareholders or beneficiaries, indicating a more passive yet significant role in supporting and benefiting from the enterprise. The distribution of roles demonstrates the multifaceted nature of participation in BUMDes, where both active and passive contributors collectively drive economic development.

Another noteworthy finding was the duration of involvement with BUMDes among the respondents. A substantial majority (80%) reported being associated with BUMDes for more than three years. This level of long-term engagement suggests a deep understanding of the organization's operations and a vested interest in its success. The familiarity gained through sustained involvement enables participants to identify and address challenges effectively, fostering continuous improvement in BUMDes activities. It also reflects the stability and reliability of BUMDes as a community institution.

Overall, these demographic insights paint a vivid picture of a community actively involved in BUMDes activities, with diverse contributions based on age, gender, education, and role. The representation of both managerial and operational participants, along with shareholders and beneficiaries, underscores the inclusive and participatory nature of BUMDes. By leveraging this diversity, BUMDes has the potential to address local economic challenges comprehensively and equitably, ensuring sustainable development for the community.

Discussion

The findings underscore the critical role of BUMDes in fostering economic growth at the village level. This section delves into the implications of the research findings, comparing them with existing literature, and discussing their relevance in the broader context of rural development.

The Role of BUMDes in Local Economic Growth

The descriptive analysis revealed that BUMDes primarily benefit individuals actively engaged in operational and managerial roles, highlighting the importance of direct involvement in achieving the goals of community-driven enterprises. This finding aligns with prior research, such as Solehatun, (2018), which emphasized that active participation in decision-making and management processes significantly enhances the impact of rural economic initiatives. By engaging individuals in hands-on roles, BUMDes fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among its participants, driving motivation and commitment toward the organization's success. This level of engagement ensures that local stakeholders are not only contributors but also beneficiaries of the economic growth facilitated by BUMDes.

The analysis further demonstrated that BUMDes activities contribute to tangible economic benefits for the community, including increased household incomes and improved access to resources such as training, credit, and market opportunities. Respondents consistently reported income growth ranging from 10% to 30% due to their involvement in BUMDes initiatives, underscoring the organization's role as a catalyst for financial empowerment. This finding resonates with Amran, (2021),

which highlights BUMDes as a transformative force in addressing rural poverty and fostering economic resilience. The ability of BUMDes to provide access to resources also bridges gaps that previously hindered economic opportunities in rural areas, empowering participants to take active steps toward financial stability.

These findings collectively emphasize the potential of BUMDes to act as a transformative agent in rural economies. By prioritizing active participation and providing mechanisms to increase household incomes and resource accessibility, BUMDes supports the overarching goal of inclusive and sustainable economic development. The alignment of these findings with prior studies reinforces the broader impact of community-driven enterprises as a model for rural economic growth. To fully realize this potential, BUMDes must continue to innovate and adapt its strategies to address emerging challenges while ensuring equitable benefits for all participants..

Gender Disparities in Participation

The t-test results revealing gender differences in participation highlight a significant aspect of societal dynamics within rural communities. Specifically, the findings suggest that persistent societal norms and traditional gender roles may restrict women's involvement in decision-making processes related to BUMDes activities. Despite women often being key contributors to household and community economies, their representation in leadership and managerial roles remains limited. This underrepresentation reflects deep-rooted cultural perceptions that view decision-making as predominantly male-dominated. Such barriers not only hinder gender equality but also restrict the full potential of BUMDes as a community-driven initiative.

This finding aligns with previous research by Thousani & Afgani, (2023), which documented similar patterns of gender disparities in rural enterprises. Their study highlighted that women, while actively involved in operational aspects, are often excluded from critical decision-making processes that shape the direction of community enterprises. This exclusion prevents women from contributing their perspectives and skills, which could otherwise enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of BUMDes initiatives. By limiting women's participation, communities miss the opportunity to harness diverse ideas and approaches that could drive innovation and growth within BUMDes.

To address these disparities, targeted interventions are essential to promote gender-inclusive participation in BUMDes activities. Leadership training programs tailored for women can empower them with the skills and confidence needed to assume managerial and decision-making roles. Additionally, community awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of gender equality in economic development can help shift cultural perceptions. Encouraging policies and practices that prioritize gender balance in leadership positions within BUMDes can further institutionalize inclusivity. By fostering an environment where women are equally represented in decision-making, BUMDes can maximize its potential as a catalyst for sustainable and equitable rural development..

Education and Knowledge-Sharing

The analysis revealing significant differences in knowledge-sharing practices across education levels underscores the crucial role education plays in enhancing the effectiveness of BUMDes operations. Respondents with higher levels of education, particularly university graduates, demonstrated greater engagement in knowledge-sharing activities compared to those with lower educational attainment. This disparity suggests that individuals with advanced education are better equipped to understand, interpret, and disseminate information critical for the development and sustainability of BUMDes. Their ability to engage in such practices not only strengthens organizational operations but also fosters a culture of collaboration and learning within the community.

This finding aligns with the theory of human capital development proposed by Becker (1993), which emphasizes the link between education and an individual's capacity to contribute to organizational learning and innovation (Peris-Ortiz et al., 2018). University graduates, with their broader exposure to knowledge and critical thinking, are often more adept at introducing innovative ideas and strategies into BUMDes operations. Their ability to facilitate knowledge-sharing among members ensures that best practices are adopted and challenges are addressed efficiently. This dynamic reinforces the idea that investing in education has a multiplier effect, as the skills and knowledge acquired by educated individuals benefit not just them but the broader community as well.

Policymakers and community leaders have a pivotal role in leveraging education to enhance the capacity of BUMDes members. Initiatives such as scholarships, vocational training programs, and capacity-building workshops can equip community members with the skills needed to actively

participate in and contribute to BUMDes operations. Furthermore, integrating knowledge-sharing as a core component of these programs can ensure that learning is not confined to individuals but shared across the organization. By prioritizing education and creating opportunities for skill enhancement, communities can unlock the full potential of BUMDes, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable model for rural economic development.

Economic Benefits and Sustainability

The economic benefits reported by respondents highlight the tangible success of BUMDes in fostering sustainable income-generating opportunities within rural communities. Respondents noted increased household incomes ranging from 10% to 30%, directly attributed to their involvement in BUMDes initiatives. This impact underscores the effectiveness of BUMDes as a tool for economic empowerment, providing resources and opportunities that were previously inaccessible. By leveraging local resources and community participation, BUMDes has managed to bridge gaps in economic opportunities, thereby contributing to a more equitable distribution of wealth within the village.

These findings align with the work of (Natalia & Mulyana, 2014)Mulyana et al., (2024), which emphasizes the pivotal role of BUMDes in reducing rural poverty through diversified economic activities. By creating platforms for microfinance, agricultural support, and local trade, BUMDes has been able to drive economic growth while addressing the specific needs of rural populations. Such initiatives not only increase financial stability for individual households but also generate a ripple effect, stimulating the local economy and fostering overall community development. However, the reliance on traditional sectors such as agriculture and trade, while effective, highlights a need for innovation to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience.

To strengthen their impact and enhance resilience, BUMDes could explore diversifying their initiatives into emerging sectors such as eco-tourism, renewable energy, or digital platforms. Eco-tourism, for instance, leverages the natural and cultural assets of rural areas to attract visitors, creating additional revenue streams while preserving the environment. Similarly, investments in renewable energy can address local energy needs and generate income by selling surplus energy to nearby regions. Digital platforms can also open new markets for rural products, allowing BUMDes to expand their reach beyond traditional boundaries. Diversification not only mitigates the risks associated with sector-specific reliance but also positions BUMDes to adapt to external shocks and emerging opportunities, ensuring sustainable development for the community.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study present several practical implications that can significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of BUMDes. First, fostering inclusive participation in BUMDes activities is essential to leverage the diverse perspectives and skills of community members. Inclusive participation ensures that both men and women, as well as individuals from various educational and socio-economic backgrounds, have opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes and operational roles. Community leaders play a pivotal role in promoting this inclusivity by creating platforms for dialogue, encouraging marginalized groups to take part, and addressing any cultural or structural barriers that limit participation. By doing so, BUMDes can harness the full potential of its human capital, fostering innovation and collaborative problem-solving.

Second, educational programs targeting knowledge-sharing and entrepreneurial skills are crucial to maximizing the potential of BUMDes. The study revealed that higher levels of education are associated with greater engagement in knowledge-sharing activities, emphasizing the need for capacity-building initiatives. Workshops, training programs, and mentorship opportunities can equip community members with the skills and confidence needed to manage and grow BUMDes effectively. Furthermore, promoting entrepreneurial skills can enable participants to identify new opportunities, improve operational efficiency, and adapt to market changes. By investing in education, BUMDes can ensure that its members are well-prepared to tackle challenges and sustain its operations over the long term.

Lastly, policymakers should provide both technical and financial support to diversify BUMDes operations and ensure their long-term sustainability. Diversification into sectors such as eco-tourism, renewable energy, or digital platforms can mitigate the risks associated with dependence on traditional industries like agriculture and trade. Technical support in the form of training, consultancy, and technology adoption can help BUMDes transition into these new sectors effectively. Additionally, financial assistance, such as grants or low-interest loans, can provide the capital needed for expansion

and innovation. By implementing policies that encourage diversification and support sustainable practices, policymakers can empower BUMDes to become resilient engines of rural economic development.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of BUMDes in fostering rural economic development, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One key limitation is the reliance on self-reported data collected through questionnaires. This approach, while efficient in gathering information from a large number of respondents, is susceptible to biases. Respondents may overstate the benefits of BUMDes activities due to social desirability or personal perceptions. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the objective impact of BUMDes initiatives. This limitation highlights the need for complementary data collection methods to validate the self-reported responses and provide a more accurate assessment of BUMDes' contributions.

Future research could address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal studies that track the impact of BUMDes over an extended period. A longitudinal approach would enable researchers to observe changes in economic and social outcomes associated with BUMDes activities, providing a clearer picture of their long-term effectiveness. Such studies could also capture variations in impact over time, shedding light on how BUMDes adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions. By examining these dynamics, future research could offer more robust evidence to guide the design and implementation of BUMDes programs.

In addition to longitudinal studies, mixed-method approaches could enhance the depth and breadth of understanding regarding BUMDes' impact. Combining quantitative methods with qualitative techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions, and ethnographic observations could provide richer insights into the experiences of participants and the underlying mechanisms driving BUMDes' effectiveness. For instance, qualitative data could reveal nuanced perspectives on how BUMDes influence community relationships, decision-making processes, and local governance. This comprehensive approach would enable researchers to explore both measurable outcomes and the subjective experiences of those involved in BUMDes activities.

Another avenue for future research is the exploration of external factors influencing the success or challenges faced by BUMDes. Government policies, market dynamics, and broader socio-economic conditions play a crucial role in shaping the operational environment for BUMDes. Investigating how these external factors interact with internal BUMDes dynamics could provide valuable insights into the barriers and enablers of their success. For example, understanding the impact of policy incentives, market access, and infrastructure development on BUMDes performance could inform strategies to optimize their operations and scalability.

Finally, comparative studies across different regions could offer a more nuanced understanding of how contextual factors affect BUMDes' effectiveness. Rural communities differ significantly in terms of cultural norms, economic activities, and resource availability, all of which influence the outcomes of BUMDes initiatives. By comparing BUMDes in diverse settings, researchers could identify best practices, common challenges, and innovative solutions tailored to specific contexts. This cross-regional perspective would not only enrich the academic understanding of BUMDes but also provide practical recommendations for policymakers and practitioners seeking to replicate their success in various environments..

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this research indicate that BUMDes plays a significant role in local economic empowerment. Through the programs run, BUMDes successfully improved community knowledge and participation, allowing residents to feel more involved and have a share in the village's economic development. Data collected demonstrate an increase in income and better access to services, indicating that BUMDes serves not only as an economic entity but also as a platform for collaboration and innovation at the village level. Furthermore, this research also reveals that demographic factors, such as age and gender, influence the levels of knowledge and community participation in BUMDes activities. Therefore, to maximize the positive impacts of BUMDes, it is crucial for managers to consider these differences when designing more inclusive programs tailored to the needs of various community groups. By

optimizing BUMDes's role, it is expected that the village economy can continue to grow and evolve, bringing broader benefits to the entire community.

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