

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP STYLE IN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (Case Study of Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) Development in Pacellekang Village, Pattallasang Subdistrict, Gowa Regency)

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the leadership style at the village level in advancing the community's economy, with a focus on the development of the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) in Pacellekang Village, Pattallasang Subdistrict, Gowa Regency. This research employs a qualitative method, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The participants in this study include the village head, village officials, BUMDes managers, members of the Village Consultative Body (BPD), community leaders, and local residents. The findings indicate that the most commonly applied leadership styles are democratic, participatory, and transformational leadership. Democratic leadership encourages community involvement in decision-making processes through village deliberation forums, while participatory leadership ensures community engagement at every stage of development—from planning to evaluation. Meanwhile, transformational leadership motivates the community to innovate, develop individual skills, and maximize local potential. The implementation of these leadership models contributes to enhancing the capacity of village human resources through various training and mentoring programs, strengthening socio-economic independence, and creating more equitable community welfare. Several factors support the success of empowerment initiatives, including strong support from village authorities, active community participation, and transparent BUMDes management. However, challenges remain, such as limited human resources, low technological adoption, and difficulties in ensuring equitable distribution of program benefits. This study recommends that the village government strengthen democratic and transformational leadership, enhance the capacity of village human resources, and optimize the role of BUMDes as a sustainable tool for community economic empowerment...

Keywords: *Village Leadership, Economic Empowerment, Village-Owned Enterprise (Bumdes), Democratic Leadership, Participatory Leadership, Transformational Leadership.*

INTRODUCTION

The village government plays a crucial role in improving community welfare through economic empowerment based on local potential. Effective leadership—especially democratic, participatory, and transformational leadership—encourages community involvement, strengthens local resource management, and supports the development of programs such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). Various leadership theories emphasize that leadership style affects motivation, performance, and community participation. Transformational, participatory, and servant leadership are considered most effective for empowerment, while autocratic leadership is only suitable in limited contexts. Key leadership traits identified by Robbins and Stogdill—such as intelligence, emotional maturity, confidence, and communication skills—also influence empowerment outcomes.

Community empowerment, according to Chambers, Ostrom, Sumodiningrat, and Ife & Tesoriero, must involve active participation, capacity strengthening, inclusive development, and access to local resources. Empowerment aims to build community independence through an enabling environment, capability strengthening, and protection for vulnerable groups.

BUMDes serves as an important institutional vehicle for strengthening the village economy. Established through village initiatives, BUMDes manages local assets, supports productive economic activities, opens employment

opportunities, and increases village income. Its success depends on competent human resources, community involvement, and strong support from the village government. In conclusion, the village government's leadership model is essential for achieving effective and sustainable community economic empowerment. Strong leadership, community participation, and well-managed BUMDes institutions are key to realizing inclusive and equitable village development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of village government leadership in community economic empowerment is grounded in three main theoretical foundations: leadership theory, community empowerment theory, and the institutional role of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). Leadership is generally defined as the ability to influence individuals or groups toward achieving common goals. According to (Robbins, 1996), leadership is the process of influencing a group toward the achievement of organizational objectives. Similarly, (Stogdill, 1948) argues that effective leadership is shaped by personal characteristics such as intelligence, emotional maturity, self-confidence, and communication skills.

In modern leadership theory, (Yukl, 2013) explains that transformational, participative, and democratic leadership styles are particularly effective in public sector organizations because they foster collective commitment and active participation. Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire, articulate a compelling vision, and encourage innovation. Participative leadership highlights the involvement of members in decision-making processes, while democratic leadership ensures transparency and deliberation in governance practices. Within the context of village governance, these leadership approaches are highly relevant because village development is fundamentally based on community participation. The village head does not merely function as an administrative authority but also acts as a social and economic change agent capable of mobilizing local potential.

Community empowerment theory further strengthens this conceptual foundation. (Chambers, 1995) defines empowerment as a process of enhancing the capacity of marginalized communities to gain control over resources and decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment is not limited to economic assistance; rather, it represents a broader process of social transformation that positions the community as the main actor in development. Likewise, (Ostrom, 1990) emphasizes the importance of local institutions in managing common resources effectively. Successful resource governance depends on collective rules, trust, and active community participation. Furthermore, (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006) argue that empowerment includes capacity building, access to economic resources, and the creation of an inclusive and sustainable social environment.

In Indonesia, community economic empowerment at the village level is institutionalized through Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). The establishment of BUMDes is mandated by Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 tentang Desa, which aims to enhance community welfare through the management of local economic potential. Its operational provisions are regulated under Peraturan Menteri Desa No. 4 Tahun 2015. Conceptually, BUMDes functions as a collective economic institution responsible for managing village assets, creating employment opportunities, and increasing Village Original Revenue (PADes).

Previous studies indicate that the success of BUMDes is closely related to village government leadership. Efendi (2018) found that open and communicative leadership enhances community participation in BUMDes management. (Kusuma, 2018) demonstrated that BUMDes can expand community access to capital, although its effectiveness depends heavily on managerial capacity and government support. (Munawaroh, 2019) emphasized that strengthening human resource capacity is a critical determinant of BUMDes sustainability. Meanwhile, (Puspayanti, 2018) highlighted financial transparency as a key prerequisite for achieving village economic independence. Despite numerous studies examining the institutional and managerial aspects of BUMDes, limited research has specifically analyzed the leadership style of village heads as a primary determinant of successful economic empowerment through BUMDes. Leadership plays a central role in shaping participation, transparency, accountability, and innovation in village economic governance. Therefore, this study positions democratic, participative, and transformational leadership styles as key variables in promoting effective community economic empowerment through strengthening BUMDes institutions. By integrating leadership theory and community empowerment perspectives within the framework of village economic development, this research contributes both theoretically and practically to the discourse on sustainable rural governance.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach, specifically using an interpretive qualitative research design. Interpretive research aims to explore and understand events or situations from the perspectives of the individuals involved or based on the information collected. The methods used include observations, interviews, and document collection. The stages of data analysis consist of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. The study utilizes two sources of data: primary data obtained through direct interviews and on-site observations, and secondary data gathered from readings, literature reviews, and documents such as books and official records (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contents Results and Discussion

This study reveals that leadership style plays a crucial role in determining the success of community empowerment. In Pacellekang Village, three dominant leadership models—democratic, participatory, and transformational—significantly contribute to enhancing community participation, capacity development, independence, and overall welfare.

Democratic leadership is reflected in the involvement of citizens in village meetings, transparent decision-making, and openness to community aspirations. Participatory leadership appears through community engagement in planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programs, although challenges remain, such as limited community time, low female participation, and passive attitudes among some residents. Transformational leadership is demonstrated by the village head's ability to motivate, inspire, and set an example, encouraging creativity and community self-reliance through a shared development vision.

In terms of community empowerment, three main dimensions were identified. Capacity building is strengthened through training, skills development programs, and BUMDes mentoring, enabling villagers to manage local resources more independently. Socio-economic independence is gradually improving through the growth of local MSMEs, agriculture, and village-based enterprises, though additional support in market access, funding, and continuous mentoring is still needed. Community welfare has increased through infrastructure development, economic initiatives, and better access to education and healthcare, although the distribution of benefits remains uneven.

Overall, the findings conclude that democratic, participatory, and transformational leadership styles are highly effective in promoting community economic and social empowerment, particularly through strengthening BUMDes, building human capacity, and implementing development policies that align with local needs..

CONCLUSION

First, the democratic leadership model plays a pivotal role in strengthening community participation in village governance. Through village deliberation forums and inclusive decision-making mechanisms, the village government creates space for transparency and accountability. These forums function not only as administrative procedures but also as participatory platforms where community members can express aspirations, provide input, and monitor development initiatives. As a result, citizens develop a sense of ownership toward development programs, which enhances collective responsibility and long-term sustainability.

Second, the participatory leadership model reinforces community engagement across all stages of the development process. Participation is not limited to planning discussions but extends to implementation and evaluation phases. This inclusive approach ensures that development programs reflect actual community needs and local priorities. When communities are actively involved, policies become more context-sensitive, socially accepted, and effective in addressing real socio-economic challenges.

Third, the transformational leadership model contributes significantly to motivating and inspiring the community. Transformational leaders articulate a clear long-term vision for village development and encourage innovation, creativity, and self-improvement among citizens. By serving as role models, village leaders foster positive behavioral change and build collective optimism. This leadership style strengthens intrinsic motivation within the community, enabling members to move beyond dependency toward proactive economic engagement.

Fourth, community capacity building emerges as a fundamental component of sustainable empowerment. The development of high-quality human resources at the village level requires systematic training, mentoring programs, and adequate infrastructure support. These initiatives enhance technical skills, managerial competence, and entrepreneurial capacity, thereby accelerating the empowerment process. Without capacity strengthening, economic programs risk becoming short-term interventions rather than sustainable development strategies.

Fifth, socio-economic independence can be realized when communities are able to effectively manage local resources, develop village-based enterprises, and reduce reliance on external assistance. The optimization of local potential—whether in agriculture, micro-enterprises, or village-owned enterprises—creates alternative income sources and strengthens local economic resilience. Economic independence is thus not merely financial autonomy but also reflects institutional and managerial maturity within the village.

Finally, community welfare represents the ultimate outcome of effective leadership and active participation. When democratic, participatory, and transformational leadership models operate synergistically with sustainable empowerment programs, the result is improved living standards, expanded economic opportunities, and stronger social cohesion. Therefore, leadership quality, community engagement, and institutional strengthening collectively determine the success of village-level economic empowerment initiatives..

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