

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VILLAGE FUND ALLOCATION (ADK) PROGRAM POLICY IN MUARA LAWА DISTRICT, WEST KUTAI REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Village Fund Allocation Program (ADK) policy in Muara Lawa District, West Kutai Regency, with a focus on supporting and inhibiting factors. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with key informants consisting of village heads, village officials, community leaders, and Muara Lawa District officials. The analysis was conducted by referring to the policy implementation theory of Mazmanian and Sabatier which emphasizes three main indicators, namely the characteristics of the problem (tractability of the problem), the ability of the policy to structure the implementation process (ability of statute to structure implementation), and non-policy variables that influence the implementation process (non-statutory variables). The results show that the implementation of ADK in Muara Lawa faces problems of limited human resource capacity, geographical constraints, and weak coordination between actors, even though regulations have provided a clear legal framework. On the other hand, local government support and community participation are important factors supporting program implementation. This study concludes that the effectiveness of ADK implementation requires strengthening the capacity of apparatus, optimizing coordination mechanisms, and increasing community involvement so that the policy truly provides tangible benefits for village development.

Keywords: *Policy Implementation, Village Fund Allocation, Muara Lawa, Mazmanian and Sabatier, Public Policy*

1. Background

Village development is a key pillar in efforts to achieve equitable national development. Since the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, villages have a greater mandate in planning, budget management, and local infrastructure development. At the global and national levels, the trend of village empowerment through direct funding to villages has emerged as a strategy to strengthen local independence, increase community participation, and reduce development disparities between regions. Globally, this phenomenon demonstrates that community-based development at the local level contributes significantly to poverty reduction, improving the quality of life, and strengthening community social capacity (World Bank, 2020). This is also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, particularly goals one and eleven, namely eradicating poverty and building inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable settlements. Therefore, governments in various countries, including Indonesia, are striving to distribute development resources down to the lowest level, namely villages or hamlets.

In Indonesia, this commitment is realized through the distribution of Village Funds (DD) and Village/Village Fund Allocations (ADD/ADK). According to data from the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (Kemendesa PDTT, 2023), from 2015 to 2022, the total Village Fund budget disbursed reached more than IDR 468 trillion and was distributed to more than 74,000 villages across Indonesia. These funds were allocated not only for physical infrastructure development but also to support community empowerment programs and strengthen the local economy. However, policy implementation on the ground does not always run as expected. Several studies indicate that various problems persist, such as delays in fund disbursement, weak capacity of village officials, low community participation, and the potential for budget misuse (Kurniawati & Pangayouw, 2017; Suparman et al., 2014). This confirms that the issue of village policy implementation requires special attention so that the goal of equitable development can be achieved effectively. In the regional context, the West Kutai Regency

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Government in East Kalimantan is one of the regions that has implemented the ADK policy. Through West Kutai Regent Regulation Number 6 of 2018 concerning ADK Management Guidelines, the regency government establishes a mechanism for the distribution, use, and accountability of funds allocated at least 10% of the central balancing funds to villages. West Kutai Regency has an area of approximately 33,052 km² with a population of 180,119 people, spread across 190 villages and 4 sub-districts in 16 districts (Central Statistics Agency of West Kutai Regency, 2023). With its vast territory, geographical challenges, and socio-cultural diversity, the effectiveness of ADK implementation in West Kutai is a crucial factor in promoting equitable development, especially in relatively remote villages. Muara Lawa District is one of the sub-districts in West Kutai Regency that is the focus of this research. This region possesses local potential in the agriculture, plantation, and other natural resource sectors, which, if managed properly, can support community welfare. However, based on preliminary findings, the implementation of the Village Fund Management System (ADK) in this sub-district still faces several obstacles. These include limited capacity of village officials in administrative and financial management, delays in fund disbursement, and low community participation in program planning and monitoring. This situation aligns with the findings of a study in West Papua, which showed that although ADK encourages physical development, empowerment and transparency aspects are not optimal (Iek et al., 2020). Similarly, another study in Yahukimo Regency, Papua, found that ADK management is quite effective, but still faces barriers to communication and community understanding (Christoffel et al., 2021).

Furthermore, issues of transparency and accountability in ADK management have also attracted public attention. A 2022 report from the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) noted persistent irregularities in the use of village funds in several regions, including delays in the submission of accountability reports and misalignment of budget allocations with community needs. This situation reinforces the urgency of research into ADK implementation, particularly in Muara Lawa District, to assess the extent to which the policy is being implemented according to regulations and the supporting and inhibiting factors. Theoretically, this policy implementation study is relevant when analyzed using the Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) implementation model, which emphasizes three main variables: the level of difficulty of the problem being addressed (tractability of the problem), the policy's ability to structure the implementation process, and external factors influencing the implementation process. This model helps explain that the success of ADK implementation in Muara Lawa is determined not only by clear regulations and the amount of funds disbursed, but also by external factors such as community support, apparatus capacity, and socioeconomic conditions at the local level. Thus, this study not only describes how the policy is implemented but also analyzes the complex dynamics that influence the effectiveness of its implementation.

Although extensive research on village fund management has been conducted in various regions of Indonesia, there remains a gap in the context of ADK policy implementation in remote areas like Muara Lawa. Most previous studies, such as those in West Papua and Highland Papua, have focused solely on the effectiveness of fund management and community participation without considering the complexity of geographic and social factors at the sub-district level (Christoffel et al., 2021; Iek et al., 2020). Other research in East Java confirms that the lack of synchronization between village and sub-district governments and minimal policy dissemination also hinder Village Fund (ADD) implementation (Astuti et al., 2021). This highlights the importance of studying ADK implementation in Muara Lawa, as there has been no in-depth study specifically assessing local dynamics, both supporting and inhibiting factors, within the framework of village development policy. Based on the description, this research is formulated to answer two main problems, namely: (1) How is the implementation of the Village Fund Allocation (ADK) program policy in Muara Lawa District? and (2) What are the inhibiting and supporting factors for the implementation of the Village Fund Allocation (ADK) program in Muara Lawa District?

2. Literature Review

Public policy implementation is a crucial stage in the policy cycle that determines the extent to which policy objectives can be achieved on the ground. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) emphasized three key factors influencing implementation: the characteristics of the problem (tractability of the problem), the ability of the policy to structure the implementation process (ability of the statute to structure implementation), and non-statutory variables. Recent studies also emphasize that policy capacity and instrument design play a crucial role in implementation effectiveness (Howlett & Ramesh, 2021). In practice, institutional factors, regulatory clarity, and resource support cannot be separated from external variables such as community participation, socio-cultural conditions, and infrastructure readiness (Nguyen et al., 2023). Furthermore, recent literature shows that policy implementation often faces challenges in adapting to social and technological complexities. Digital transformation, for example, promotes transparency and citizen participation, but still faces obstacles such as infrastructure gaps and public access (Bonsón et al., 2022). In the context of disasters, studies of the post-tsunami Aceh show that successful policy implementation is heavily influenced by cross-institutional coordination, adaptive governance, and public trust (Lassa et al., 2023).

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Furthermore, a systematic review by Tosun and Peters (2022) emphasized that bureaucracy, communication, and implementing capacity are often overlooked dimensions that determine successful implementation. Therefore, the use of Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory, enriched by contemporary findings from the Scopus literature, provides an appropriate framework for understanding public policy implementation, including the Village Fund Allocation (ADK) program.

3. Method

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for understanding policy implementation contextually and in-depth through social interactions at the local level (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research location was determined in Muara Lawa District, West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan, which was chosen because of its diverse geographic and social conditions that can influence the implementation of Village Fund Allocation (ADK). Informants were determined through a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting parties who are considered to have a deep understanding of the issue. The research informants consisted of the Village Head, Village Secretary, Finance Officer, Community Leaders, and Muara Lawa District Officials. This strategy was deemed appropriate because it allowed researchers to obtain rich and relevant data from actors who play a direct and indirect role in ADK implementation (Etikan et al., 2016). Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted to explore informants' experiences and perspectives regarding the ADK implementation process, supporting factors, and obstacles encountered. Observations were used to assess field conditions, while documentation included a review of regent regulations, ADK realization reports, and statistical data. Data analysis employed an interactive model encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2019). Data validity was strengthened by triangulation of sources and methods, thus enhancing the credibility of the research results (Flick, 2018). With this design, the research is expected to provide a clear picture of the dynamics of ADK policy implementation in Muara Lawa District.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Problem Characteristics (Tractability of the Problems)

Based on interviews with the Village Head and Village Secretary in Muara Lawa, the main problem in implementing the Village Fund Allocation (ADK) lies in the limited capacity of village officials in administrative and financial management. The Village Secretary informant stated that "there are still difficulties in preparing accountability reports, particularly related to budget coding and application-based reporting." In addition, the delay in disbursement of ADK from the district is also a significant obstacle. Sub-district officials added that this technical obstacle has prevented several village development programs from being implemented on time. On the other hand, community leaders highlighted the low level of community participation in village planning meetings, as some residents perceive ADK management as the domain of village officials. These findings indicate that the problems faced are complex because they are not only related to technical financial aspects, but also social aspects in the form of community participation.

4.2 Policy Ability to Structure the Implementation Process (Ability of Statute to Structure Implementation)

West Kutai Regent Regulation No. 6 of 2018 provides clear guidelines regarding the distribution and use of ADK. However, according to the Head of Finance, "despite the existing regulations, many village officials still do not fully understand their contents, especially regarding the management of funds for empowerment." Interviews with Village Heads revealed that most programs focus primarily on physical development, while community empowerment and human resource capacity building programs receive relatively little budget allocation. Sub-district officials confirmed that district supervision is indeed carried out, but is often not accompanied by adequate technical training for village officials. Thus, although the policy normatively regulates the implementation structure, the capacity of implementing actors in the field remains suboptimal.

4.3 Non-Statutory Variables Affecting Implementation

External factors also significantly influence the implementation of ADK. Village heads and community leaders mentioned the geographical conditions of Muara Lawa District, which makes some areas difficult to access, especially during the rainy season. This transportation barrier causes delays in the distribution of construction materials and supervision by sub-district officials. Furthermore, the community's cultural tendency to fully hand over fund management to village officials reduces public participation. Informants from sub-district officials added that

the limited local human resources with technical expertise in accounting and administration are also external factors that slow down the implementation process.

4.4 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in ADK Implementation

The research results indicate that the implementation of the Village Fund Allocation Program (ADK) in Muara Lawa District is influenced by a number of supporting and inhibiting factors arising from both internal and external policy implementers. The main supporting factor comes from regulatory support and regional policies that provide legal legitimacy for ADK implementation. Village heads and village officials stated that the existence of the West Kutai Regent's Regulation concerning guidelines for ADK use is an important reference in setting village development priorities. In addition, the commitment of the local government and active community participation in village deliberations also strengthen program implementation, particularly in determining development priorities that are in line with local needs. Informants from community leaders emphasized that community involvement in planning gives the community a sense of ownership of the program, thereby encouraging a sense of responsibility in its implementation. On the other hand, there are a number of significant inhibiting factors in the implementation of ADK. First, the limited human resource capacity of village officials, both in terms of technical and administrative understanding, is a frequent obstacle, as acknowledged by village officials who still require intensive training. Second, the geographical conditions of Muara Lawa, with some areas difficult to reach, often hampering the distribution of materials and program supervision due to time and costs. Third, the lack of coordination between actors, both between villages and sub-districts, as well as with relevant agencies in the district, leads to overlapping activities and delays in fund disbursement. Another obstacle that has emerged is the lack of policy socialization, resulting in some communities not fully understanding the objectives of ADK and its implementation mechanisms. Thus, although supporting factors such as regulations, government commitment, and community participation are quite strong, these technical and structural obstacles still limit the effectiveness of ADK implementation in Muara Lawa Sub-district.

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of ADK in Muara Lawa District faces both structural and cultural barriers. In terms of the characteristics of the problems, the limited capacity of village officials and low community participation indicate that implementation issues are not only technical but also social. This aligns with research (Suparman et al., 2014), which indicates that the weak capacity of village officials in ADK management and low community oversight are the main factors causing the program's suboptimal implementation. Regarding the policy's ability to structure the implementation process, despite clear guidelines provided by regional regulations, gaps in the understanding and skills of village officials remain. This finding aligns with a study (Iek et al., 2020) in West Papua, which found that the majority of village fund allocations focused on physical development rather than community empowerment due to weak technical understanding and limited human resource capacity. This means that regulations alone are insufficient without the necessary guidance and capacity building of policy implementers.

Meanwhile, in terms of variables outside of policy, geographic, social, and human resource factors pose real challenges. Geographical barriers causing implementation delays were also found in research (Christoffel et al. (2021) in Highlands Papua, where regional accessibility was a major obstacle to the realization of the village program. Furthermore, the community's passive culture and tendency to hand over management to officials reinforces the findings of research by Astuti et al. (2021) which emphasizes the need for increased policy dissemination to encourage greater community participation. Thus, the implementation of ADK in Muara Lawa District can be categorized as not fully effective. Internal obstacles such as apparatus capacity and low public participation, as well as external obstacles such as geographic conditions and limited local human resources, demonstrate the need for a more intensive development strategy from the district government. Strengthening transparency, accountability, and community involvement are key to ensuring the ADK policy is truly effective in promoting equitable development at the village level.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results, the implementation of the Village Fund Allocation Program (ADK) policy in Muara Lawa District, West Kutai Regency, is proceeding with dynamics that reflect structural and contextual challenges. In terms of problem characteristics, ADK implementation faces complex issues related to limited human resources among village officials, a lack of technical understanding among the community, and geographical conditions that complicate distribution access. In terms of policy capacity in structuring the implementation process, existing regulations have provided a fairly clear legal framework, but weaknesses in the aspects of coordination, supervision, and socialization have led to a gap between formal regulations and practices in the field. Meanwhile, in terms of non-statutory variables, external factors such as community participation, local government support, and socio-cultural dynamics play an important role in determining the success or obstacles of ADK implementation. Thus,

this study confirms that the effectiveness of ADK policy implementation is largely determined by the synergy between regulatory quality, apparatus capacity, and community involvement. The primary supporting factors are regulatory support and commitment from local governments, while the main obstacles stem from limited human resources, geographic conditions, and weak cross-actor coordination. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of village officials, increasing policy dissemination, and implementing more participatory monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed for the ADK program to truly improve the welfare of village communities in Muara Lawa District.

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