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Effectiveness of Village Fund Policy in Increasing Infrastructure Development in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency

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Abstract: *Village Funds constitute one of the Indonesian government's primary policy instruments for promoting equitable rural development through infrastructure improvement and community empowerment. However, the effectiveness of Village Fund implementation varies across regions due to differences in governance capacity, community participation, and accountability. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Village Fund policy in enhancing infrastructure development in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using primary data collected through observations, semi-structured interviews with village officials and community representatives, and documentation analysis. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the Village Fund policy has been implemented effectively through participatory planning, transparent implementation, and collaborative supervision involving both the village government and local communities. Infrastructure projects, including road improvements, clean water facilities, drainage systems, and public utilities, have significantly improved accessibility, mobility, and residents' quality of life while supporting local economic activities. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, particularly implementation delays, limited administrative capacity, budget constraints, and the need for stronger transparency mechanisms. The study concludes that the effectiveness of Village Fund policy depends not only on financial allocation but also on participatory governance, institutional capacity, and continuous public oversight. These findings contribute to the literature on rural development and public policy implementation by providing empirical evidence from an Indonesian village context and offering policy recommendations to strengthen sustainable infrastructure development and village governance.*
Keywords*: Village Fund Policy; Infrastructure Development; Policy Effectiveness; Rural Development; Participatory Governance.*

1. Introduction

Village development has become one of the most strategic public policy agendas in many developing countries because it directly influences economic growth, poverty reduction, social welfare, and regional equality. Infrastructure development, in particular, plays a fundamental role in improving accessibility, facilitating economic activities, strengthening public services, and reducing disparities between rural and urban areas. Numerous studies have demonstrated that investment in rural infrastructure contributes significantly to productivity improvement, poverty alleviation, and sustainable economic development. Consequently, governments increasingly prioritize decentralized fiscal policies that empower local governments to determine development priorities based on community needs rather than centralized administrative decisions. In Indonesia, fiscal decentralization has been substantially strengthened through the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, which grants villages greater authority to manage their financial resources independently. One of the most important consequences of this legislation is the implementation of the Village Fund (Dana Desa), financed through the State Budget (APBN) and distributed via district governments. The policy aims to accelerate rural development by financing village administration, infrastructure development, community empowerment, and social services. Since its implementation, the Village Fund has become one of the largest fiscal transfer programs in Indonesia, reflecting the government's commitment to reducing regional disparities while promoting inclusive economic growth.

The Village Fund policy represents more than a financial transfer mechanism; it also embodies a governance reform emphasizing participation, transparency, accountability, and community empowerment. Village governments are expected to formulate development priorities through participatory village deliberations (*musyawarah desa*), ensuring that infrastructure investments reflect actual community needs. Consequently, policy effectiveness is determined not only by the amount of financial allocation but also by institutional capacity, governance quality, stakeholder participation, and accountability mechanisms throughout planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Infrastructure development remains one of the dominant priorities in Village Fund utilization because rural infrastructure constitutes the foundation of socioeconomic development. Improvements in village roads, drainage systems, irrigation networks, clean water facilities, public lighting, and sanitation contribute directly to increased mobility, lower transportation costs, improved agricultural productivity, better public health, and greater accessibility to education and health services. Previous research consistently demonstrates that adequate rural infrastructure enhances community welfare by creating favorable conditions for local economic development and poverty reduction (Simbolon et al., 2021).

Despite substantial financial support, however, the effectiveness of Village Fund implementation remains inconsistent across Indonesian villages. Several empirical studies reveal that while many villages successfully utilize Village Funds to improve physical infrastructure, others continue to experience administrative inefficiency, delayed project implementation, weak accountability, inadequate transparency, limited community participation, and insufficient monitoring. These governance challenges reduce the effectiveness of public spending and may weaken public trust in village institutions. Poluan et al. (2021), for example, found that Village Fund utilization generally achieved its objectives in terms of program understanding, target accuracy, and infrastructure realization. Nevertheless, project implementation frequently experienced delays due to administrative constraints and limited managerial capacity. Similarly, Fatimah et al. (2024) reported that although planning and implementation stages were relatively effective, evaluation and accountability mechanisms remained weak because community participation during post-project assessment was still limited. These findings indicate that successful infrastructure development depends not merely on budget allocation but also on governance quality throughout the policy implementation process.

Furthermore, increasing public attention toward Village Fund management reflects growing concerns regarding accountability and transparency. Media reports concerning alleged misuse of village funds in several regions have intensified public demand for stronger governance mechanisms and more effective supervision. Although such cases cannot be generalized to all villages, they highlight the importance of evaluating Village Fund implementation using comprehensive indicators of policy effectiveness. Public accountability, transparency, participatory governance, and institutional capacity have therefore become essential dimensions for assessing whether Village Fund policies genuinely achieve their intended development objectives. From a theoretical perspective, policy effectiveness refers to the extent to which public policies achieve predetermined objectives through efficient utilization of available resources. According to organizational effectiveness theory proposed by Steers, policy effectiveness can be evaluated through several dimensions, including goal achievement, target accuracy, implementation efficiency, stakeholder participation, and measurable outcomes. Within the context of Village Fund implementation, these dimensions provide an appropriate analytical framework for evaluating whether infrastructure development programs successfully address community needs while maintaining transparency, accountability, and sustainability.

Although previous studies have extensively investigated Village Fund implementation, several research gaps remain evident. First, many existing studies emphasize financial accountability, budget absorption, or administrative compliance while providing relatively limited discussion regarding the relationship between governance effectiveness and infrastructure outcomes. Second, previous empirical evidence largely concentrates on broader regional analyses, whereas village-specific investigations capable of explaining contextual implementation dynamics remain relatively limited. Third, relatively few studies integrate participatory governance, policy implementation, and infrastructure development into a single analytical framework capable of explaining how governance quality influences development effectiveness at the village level. These gaps justify the need for further empirical investigation, particularly in villages that receive substantial Village Fund allocations and prioritize infrastructure development. Balumbung Village, located in Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency, represents an appropriate research setting because it consistently receives Village Fund allocations while actively implementing various infrastructure development programs, including road improvements, clean water facilities, retaining walls, drainage systems, public lighting, and supporting public infrastructure. Nevertheless, the extent to which these investments effectively improve community welfare and reflect principles of participatory governance remains insufficiently documented.

Unlike previous studies that primarily evaluate financial performance or administrative compliance, this research simultaneously examines planning, implementation, community participation, supervision, transparency, and infrastructure outcomes within an integrated policy effectiveness framework. This approach enables a more comprehensive understanding of how governance practices influence infrastructure development performance at the village level. Consequently, this study contributes to the public administration and rural development literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the interaction between participatory governance and infrastructure effectiveness within Indonesia's decentralized fiscal system. The practical contribution of this study is equally important. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based recommendations for village governments, district governments, and policymakers to improve Village Fund governance, strengthen accountability mechanisms, enhance community participation, and optimize infrastructure investment outcomes. Moreover, the study contributes to achieving sustainable rural development by identifying governance factors that influence the success of decentralized fiscal policies.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Village Fund policy in improving infrastructure development in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency. Specifically, the research evaluates the effectiveness of planning, implementation, community participation, supervision, and infrastructure outcomes while identifying institutional challenges that influence policy implementation. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on decentralized public policy implementation, participatory governance, and rural infrastructure development, while providing practical insights for improving Village Fund management in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Village Fund Policy

Fiscal decentralization has become one of the principal approaches adopted by developing countries to improve public service delivery, strengthen local governance, and reduce regional disparities. Within this framework, local governments are granted greater authority to determine development priorities according to community needs while maintaining accountability for public expenditure. In Indonesia, fiscal decentralization at the village level is institutionalized through the Village Fund (*Dana Desa*), which was introduced following the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. The policy provides direct fiscal transfers from the national government to villages to finance governance, infrastructure development, community empowerment, and socioeconomic development.

Unlike conventional transfer mechanisms, the Village Fund emphasizes participatory governance, where development priorities are determined through village deliberation (*musyawarah desa*). Consequently, Village Funds are not merely financial resources but also instruments for strengthening democratic governance, accountability, transparency, and community participation. The ultimate objective is to improve rural welfare through infrastructure provision, human resource development, and local economic empowerment. Recent studies demonstrate that Village Funds have contributed positively to improving rural infrastructure, expanding public services, and reducing regional inequality. However, policy outcomes differ substantially among villages because implementation effectiveness depends on institutional capacity, governance quality, leadership, and community participation rather than financial allocation alone.

2.2. Policy Effectiveness Theory

Policy effectiveness refers to the extent to which a public policy achieves its predetermined objectives while utilizing available resources efficiently. In public administration literature, effectiveness is commonly interpreted as the successful attainment of organizational goals through appropriate planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This study adopts the organizational effectiveness perspective proposed by Richard M. Steers, which argues that organizational effectiveness is reflected in the achievement of objectives, adaptability, internal integration, and efficient resource utilization. Within public policy implementation, effectiveness is generally evaluated through several dimensions:

- achievement of policy objectives;
- accuracy of program targets;
- timeliness of implementation;
- efficient utilization of available resources;
- stakeholder participation;
- measurable outcomes experienced by beneficiaries.

These dimensions are highly relevant for evaluating Village Fund policies because infrastructure development requires not only budget realization but also effective governance processes involving planning, implementation, supervision, and public accountability.

Previous empirical studies consistently indicate that villages demonstrating higher levels of participation, transparency, and administrative capacity generally achieve more effective development outcomes than villages with weaker governance structures.

2.3. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure is widely recognized as one of the most important determinants of long-term economic growth and social welfare. Rural infrastructure includes roads, bridges, irrigation systems, drainage facilities, clean water supply, sanitation facilities, public lighting, and other public facilities supporting community activities. Economic development theory suggests that infrastructure reduces transaction costs, improves market accessibility, enhances agricultural productivity, facilitates labor mobility, and stimulates investment. Consequently, infrastructure investment produces multiplier effects that extend beyond physical development by promoting employment creation, increasing household income, and improving public service accessibility.

Within rural development, infrastructure also supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to poverty reduction, clean water, decent work, reduced inequalities, and sustainable communities. Therefore, evaluating infrastructure development requires not only measuring physical outputs but also assessing its socioeconomic impacts on local communities. Empirical evidence indicates that villages receiving effective infrastructure investments experience higher economic productivity and improved quality of life. Nevertheless, infrastructure sustainability depends on maintenance systems, community ownership, and continuous institutional support.

2.4. Participatory Governance in Village Development

Participatory governance emphasizes active involvement of stakeholders throughout policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Within Village Fund management, participation occurs primarily through village deliberation forums where community members identify development priorities and evaluate government performance. Good governance principles—including participation, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, and rule of law—are essential determinants of successful Village Fund implementation. Active community participation enhances policy legitimacy while strengthening public oversight and reducing opportunities for fund misuse. Several studies have shown that participatory planning improves program relevance because infrastructure projects better reflect local priorities. Moreover, community participation during supervision increases transparency and encourages better financial accountability. Villages with stronger participatory governance generally demonstrate more sustainable infrastructure outcomes than villages relying exclusively on administrative decision-making.

2.5. Previous Studies

Numerous empirical studies have examined Village Fund implementation from different perspectives. Poluan et al. (2021) reported that Village Fund utilization successfully achieved program objectives, target accuracy, and infrastructure development; however, implementation delays remained an important challenge affecting overall effectiveness. Fatimah et al. (2024) concluded that planning and implementation processes were relatively effective, although accountability and post-project evaluation mechanisms required substantial improvement because community involvement remained limited. Zahran and Mursyidah (2024) demonstrated that infrastructure development funded through Village Funds improved community welfare, although governance constraints—including delayed maintenance and administrative capacity—continued to reduce policy effectiveness.

Similarly, Sariman and Jamil (2025) found that Village Fund utilization effectively supported infrastructure and local economic development through road construction, irrigation systems, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), and MSME empowerment. Nevertheless, sustaining development outcomes requires stronger governance capacity and long-term maintenance strategies. At the national level, recent evidence indicates that Village Funds contribute positively to poverty reduction and rural development; however, their effectiveness varies considerably according to institutional quality, fiscal capacity, and governance performance across villages.

2.6. Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights regarding Village Fund implementation, several research gaps remain. First, most studies primarily emphasize budget realization, financial accountability, or poverty reduction while providing limited analysis of how governance quality influences infrastructure development outcomes. Second, empirical investigations frequently evaluate Village Funds at district or provincial levels, whereas village-specific analyses capable of explaining contextual implementation dynamics remain relatively limited. Third, relatively few studies integrate participatory governance, policy effectiveness theory, and infrastructure development into a comprehensive analytical framework. Existing research often evaluates only one dimension of implementation rather than examining the interaction among planning, implementation, supervision, participation, and development outcomes.

Therefore, this study proposes an integrated analytical framework in which Village Fund policy effectiveness is evaluated through five interconnected dimensions: participatory planning, implementation effectiveness, community participation, supervision and accountability, and infrastructure development outcomes. This framework is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how governance quality determines the effectiveness of Village Fund implementation in improving rural infrastructure. The conceptual contribution of this study lies in extending previous literature by integrating public policy implementation, participatory governance, and rural infrastructure development into a unified framework that explains how institutional governance shapes development effectiveness at the village level.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the effectiveness of the Village Fund policy in improving infrastructure development in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of policy implementation processes, stakeholder interactions, governance practices, and community perceptions within their natural setting. Rather than testing hypotheses, qualitative research emphasizes understanding social phenomena through participants' experiences and contextual interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020). The descriptive qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore how the Village Fund policy was planned, implemented, supervised, and perceived by various stakeholders involved in village governance. This approach facilitates comprehensive exploration of the relationship between governance mechanisms and infrastructure development outcomes.

3.2. Research Site and Period

The research was conducted in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The village was purposively selected because it consistently receives one of the largest Village Fund allocations within Bantaeng Regency and has implemented various infrastructure development programs, including road construction, clean water facilities, drainage systems, public lighting, and supporting public infrastructure. Fieldwork was conducted from January to April 2026, covering all stages of data collection, including preliminary observation, interviews, documentation, data verification, and follow-up discussions with key informants.

3.3. Participants and Sampling Technique

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly applied in qualitative research to identify individuals possessing relevant knowledge and direct experience regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The inclusion criteria required participants to (1) be directly involved in Village Fund planning or implementation, (2) possess sufficient knowledge regarding infrastructure development, and (3) be willing to participate voluntarily in the research. Six key informants participated in this study, consisting of:

Informant	Role
Village Head	Key informant
Head of Village Planning Affairs	Key informant
Village Planning Staff	Supporting informant
Community Leader	Supporting informant
Local Resident	Supporting informant
Local Resident	Supporting informant

The diversity of participants enabled data triangulation by incorporating perspectives from both village administrators and community members.

3.4. Data Sources

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from observations, semi-structured interviews, and field documentation. These data provided first-hand information regarding Village Fund implementation, governance practices, and infrastructure development. Secondary data were collected from government regulations, village development reports, Village Budget (APBDes) documents, official statistics, policy documents, previous research articles, books, and other scholarly publications relevant to Village Fund governance and rural infrastructure development. The combination of multiple data sources strengthened the credibility and comprehensiveness of the research findings.

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

Three complementary techniques were employed to collect data. Observation was conducted through direct field visits to infrastructure development sites in order to examine physical conditions, implementation processes, and community utilization of completed facilities. Field observations also enabled researchers to compare interview responses with actual conditions. Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary data collection method. Interview guidelines were prepared based on research objectives while allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions. Interviews focused on planning processes, implementation mechanisms, transparency, accountability, community participation, supervision, implementation challenges, and perceived infrastructure outcomes. Documentation involved collecting village regulations, planning documents, budget reports, infrastructure project records, photographs, meeting minutes, and other official documents that supported interview findings and facilitated data triangulation.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), consisting of four interrelated stages. The first stage involved data collection, where information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation was systematically organized. The second stage comprised data condensation, during which researchers selected, simplified, coded, categorized, and interpreted relevant information according to the research objectives. Coding was performed by identifying recurring themes related to policy planning, implementation, participation, supervision, governance, and infrastructure outcomes. The third stage involved data display, whereby categorized findings were organized into descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic relationships to facilitate interpretation and identify emerging patterns. The final stage consisted of conclusion drawing and verification, during which preliminary interpretations were continuously compared with field evidence, interview transcripts, and documentary sources until consistent conclusions were obtained. Verification was conducted throughout the research process to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected participants' perspectives.

3.7. Trustworthiness of the Study

To enhance the rigor and credibility of qualitative findings, the study adopted several trustworthiness strategies proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation of data sources, member checking, and repeated verification of interview findings. Transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and implementation processes, allowing readers to evaluate the applicability of findings in similar contexts. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of research procedures, interview protocols, coding processes, and analytical decisions.

Confirmability was maintained by preserving interview transcripts, field notes, documentary evidence, and analytical memos to minimize researcher bias and ensure that conclusions were grounded in empirical evidence.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to fundamental research ethics throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of personal information, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Informed consent was obtained before conducting interviews, and participant identities were anonymized during data analysis and reporting to protect privacy and confidentiality.

4.Results and Discussion

4.1. Infrastructure Development Programs (2022–2025)

The implementation of the Village Fund policy in Balumbung Village during the 2022–2025 period was primarily directed toward supporting economic and infrastructure development. Village Fund allocations were utilized to finance various infrastructure projects designed to improve public services, accessibility, and the overall quality of life of local residents. The implementation pattern demonstrates that infrastructure development remained the principal priority of village development planning throughout the study period. Table 4.3 presents the infrastructure development programs implemented in 2022. During this year, Balumbung Village carried out four major infrastructure projects with a total budget allocation of Rp 308,656,000. The largest proportion of the budget was allocated to the construction of a village reservoir (*Embung Desa*), amounting to Rp 199,047,000, representing the highest infrastructure expenditure during 2022. Other projects included the construction of a concrete road shoulder, retaining wall development, and the installation of village street lighting. In addition, supporting infrastructure programs such as water pipeline installation in Borong Inru Hamlet and maintenance of public street lighting were implemented with a separate allocation totaling Rp 73,050,000.

Table 4.3. Infrastructure Development Programs in Balumbung Village, 2022

No.	Program	Location	Budget	Completion (%)
1	Water Pipeline Installation	Borong Inru Hamlet	Rp 46,050,000	100
2	Street Lighting Maintenance and Bulb Replacement	Entire Village	Rp 27,000,000	100
	Total		Rp 73,050,000	100
No.	Program	Location	Budget	Completion (%)
1	Village Reservoir Construction	Balumbung Hamlet	Rp 199,047,000	100
2	Concrete Road Shoulder Construction	Balumbung Hamlet	Rp 67,555,000	100
3	Construction of 125-meter Retaining Wall	Balumbung Hamlet	Rp 42,054,000	100
4	Improvement of Village Street Lighting	Entire Village	Rp 17,950,000	100

	Total		Rp 308,656,000	100

The data indicate that infrastructure investment in 2022 emphasized improving basic public facilities, particularly water resource management and transportation infrastructure. The construction of the village reservoir received the largest allocation because it was considered a strategic investment to improve water availability and strengthen local agricultural activities. Table 4.4 summarizes the infrastructure development implemented during 2023. Compared with the previous year, the number of infrastructure projects declined substantially. Only two infrastructure programs were implemented, with a total expenditure of Rp 73,050,000. This reduction suggests a temporary adjustment in village development priorities, which may have been influenced by fiscal capacity, implementation scheduling, or changes in local development needs. Although fewer projects were implemented in 2023, the completed programs remained focused on maintaining essential public infrastructure and ensuring the continuity of village public services.

Infrastructure investment increased considerably in 2024. As presented in Table 4.5, the village government allocated Rp 350,577,500 to two major infrastructure projects. The largest allocation was devoted to water pipeline installation in Borong Inru and Pakku Hamlets, amounting to Rp 301,377,500, making it the most expensive infrastructure project implemented during the four-year observation period. The remaining budget was allocated to village street lighting maintenance and replacement of lighting equipment.

Table 4.5. Infrastructure Development Programs in Balumbung Village, 2024

No.	Program	Location	Budget	Completion (%)
1	Water Pipeline Installation	Borong Inru and Pakku Hamlets	Rp 301,377,500	100
2	Street Lighting Maintenance and Bulb Replacement	Entire Village	Rp 49,200,000	100
	Total		Rp 350,577,500	100

The substantial investment in clean water infrastructure reflects the village government's commitment to improving access to safe water and strengthening basic public services. This investment also indicates that infrastructure priorities were adjusted according to community needs identified during village planning deliberations. In 2025, infrastructure development became more diversified. As shown in Table 4.6, six infrastructure projects were completed with a total budget allocation of Rp 264,758,000. These projects included retaining wall construction, additional water pipeline installation, construction of two water reservoirs, waste collection facilities, and maintenance of village street lighting.

Table 4.6. Infrastructure Development Programs in Balumbung Village, 2025

No.	Program	Location	Budget	Completion (%)
1	Retaining Wall Construction	Pakku Hamlet	Rp 86,857,000	100
2	Water Pipeline Installation	Pakku Hamlet	Rp 54,225,000	100
3	Water Reservoir Construction 1	Borong Inru Hamlet	Rp 28,544,000	100

4	Water Reservoir Construction 2	Balumbung Hamlet	Rp 58,171,000	100
5	Waste Collection Facility	Balumbung Hamlet	Rp 5,373,000	100
6	Street Lighting Maintenance and Bulb Replacement	Entire Village	Rp 31,590,000	100
	Total		Rp 264,758,000	100

Among the projects implemented in 2025, retaining wall construction received the largest allocation, totaling Rp 86,857,000. The diversification of infrastructure investments demonstrates that the village government had shifted from focusing solely on major infrastructure construction toward improving a broader range of public facilities that directly support environmental quality, public safety, and basic community services. Overall, the infrastructure development programs implemented between 2022 and 2025 indicate that Village Fund allocations were consistently prioritized for improving essential public infrastructure. Although annual budget allocations and project priorities varied, the implemented programs consistently focused on transportation infrastructure, water supply systems, environmental facilities, and public utilities. These findings suggest that Village Fund utilization in Balumbung Village was aligned with local development priorities and reflected the village government's commitment to improving community welfare through sustainable infrastructure development.

4.2. Effectiveness of the Village Fund Policy

The effectiveness of the Village Fund policy in Balumbung Village was evaluated using several key indicators, including target accuracy, timeliness of implementation, community participation, and the alignment of development programs with community needs. Findings from interviews and field observations indicate that the implementation of the Village Fund policy has generally been effective, as the planning and execution processes adhered to the applicable legal framework and administrative procedures governing village development.

Planning and Policy Implementation

The interview results revealed that Village Fund planning follows a structured and participatory process. The planning process begins with village deliberation meetings (*Musyawarah Desa*), followed by public consultations, program prioritization, and formal approval before implementation. Village officials emphasized that every proposed development activity must comply with the authority granted to village governments under Indonesian regulations. Consequently, not all community proposals can be immediately implemented because each proposal must first be assessed according to legal provisions, development priorities, and budget availability.

One key informant explained:

"Every process follows a clear sequence, starting from village deliberation meetings, public socialization, and implementation. Everything must comply with existing regulations. Community proposals are always considered based on the authority assigned to the village government."

This statement indicates that policy implementation is guided not only by community aspirations but also by statutory regulations and administrative procedures. Such compliance demonstrates that village development planning is conducted within an accountable governance framework, thereby minimizing the risk of arbitrary decision-making.

Community Awareness and Participation

Community participation emerged as one of the strongest indicators of policy effectiveness. Most residents reported that they were well informed about Village Fund programs because the village government conducted public information sessions before project implementation.

One community member stated:

"We know about the Village Fund programs because the village government usually conducts socialization meetings before construction activities begin."

Another respondent explained:

"The development programs are planned jointly by the village government and the community through village deliberation meetings."

These findings demonstrate that public participation extends beyond symbolic consultation. Instead, community members are actively involved in identifying development priorities, expressing local needs, and contributing ideas during the planning process. Such participatory governance enhances the legitimacy of public policies while increasing public trust in village institutions.

Target Accuracy

Another important dimension of policy effectiveness concerns the extent to which implemented programs address community needs. Based on interviews with both village officials and local residents, most infrastructure projects were considered highly relevant to local priorities, particularly regarding road improvement, clean water provision, and community economic support.

A community respondent commented:

"In our opinion, the development projects implemented by the village government are consistent with what the community actually needs."

This finding suggests that development priorities are largely determined through bottom-up planning mechanisms, allowing infrastructure investments to respond directly to local problems. Consequently, the Village Fund has been utilized not merely to fulfill administrative requirements but also to provide tangible public benefits.

Timeliness of Implementation

Timeliness also constitutes an important indicator of implementation effectiveness. Interviews with village officials revealed that each infrastructure project is assigned a specific implementation schedule to ensure that construction activities are completed according to the planned timeline and budget cycle.

One village official stated:

"If a project is scheduled to be completed within three months, it must be finished within that period so that the next stage of development can proceed as planned."

This statement indicates that project management follows predetermined schedules, allowing infrastructure development to proceed systematically. Although minor operational challenges occasionally occurred, most projects were completed within the expected implementation period.

Community Participation in Monitoring

The study further found that community involvement continued throughout the implementation phase. Local residents not only participated in planning activities but also monitored project implementation and evaluated construction quality.

One participant explained:

"We are involved from the planning stage through implementation and monitoring, so we feel responsible for ensuring that the development projects are successful."

Community participation in monitoring strengthens social accountability by encouraging transparency and reducing opportunities for misuse of public funds. Continuous public oversight also reinforces the accountability of village officials throughout the implementation process.

Transparency and Accountability

Interview findings indicate that Village Fund disbursement follows a phased mechanism established by government regulations. Each funding stage is released only after previous implementation requirements have been fulfilled and verified. This staged financial management system enables better financial control and ensures that development activities progress according to approved plans. The implementation of transparent financial procedures demonstrates that village officials recognize the importance of accountability in public financial management. Furthermore, regular reporting and community supervision contribute to maintaining public confidence in Village Fund governance.

Overall Policy Effectiveness

Overall, the findings indicate that the Village Fund policy in Balumbung Village has been implemented effectively. Evidence from interviews, observations, and documentation shows strong consistency between development planning and implementation, active community participation throughout the policy process, and continuous monitoring by both village authorities and local residents. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of Village Fund implementation is influenced not only by the amount of financial resources available but also by institutional governance, participatory decision-making, administrative capacity, transparency, and accountability. The integration of these governance principles has enabled Balumbung Village to utilize Village Funds in a manner that supports sustainable infrastructure development while addressing the priority needs of the local community.

4.3. Infrastructure Development and Its Contribution to Community Welfare

Infrastructure development has become one of the primary priorities in the utilization of Village Funds in Balumbung Village because it directly supports socioeconomic activities and improves the quality of public services. During the 2022–2025 implementation period, Village Fund allocations were predominantly directed toward the construction and maintenance of essential public infrastructure, including village roads, retaining walls, water reservoirs, clean water pipeline systems, street lighting, and waste management facilities. These investments were intended to improve accessibility, strengthen public service delivery, and enhance the overall quality of life of village residents. The interview findings indicate that the village government prioritized infrastructure projects based on the fundamental needs identified through village deliberation meetings. In recent years, the development agenda has focused primarily on improving access to clean water and upgrading public facilities that directly affect community welfare.

One village official explained:
"Over the past few years, the village government has concentrated on improving water infrastructure and upgrading public facilities for the community."
This statement demonstrates that infrastructure planning was formulated according to community priorities rather than administrative preferences alone. Such an approach reflects the principle of participatory development, in which public investment decisions are based on local needs and collective deliberation.

Improvement of Basic Public Services

One of the most significant achievements of the Village Fund policy has been the improvement of basic public services, particularly access to clean water. The construction of water reservoirs and pipeline distribution systems has substantially improved water availability for households, especially during the dry season when water shortages were previously common.

A community member stated:

"The construction of water reservoirs and pipelines has made it much easier for us to obtain clean water, especially during the dry season."

The findings indicate that water infrastructure projects have produced direct and tangible benefits for local residents. Improved access to clean water not only enhances public health but also reduces the time and effort required for daily household activities. Consequently, these investments contribute to both social welfare and long-term rural development.

Improvement of Accessibility and Community Mobility

Village road improvement projects also generated considerable benefits for the community. Road rehabilitation enhanced transportation accessibility, facilitated the movement of people and goods, and supported local economic activities.

One respondent explained:

"The improved roads have made our daily activities much easier because transportation has become more convenient."

Improved road infrastructure reduces travel time, lowers transportation costs, and increases connectivity between villages and surrounding economic centers. Better accessibility also facilitates access to education, healthcare, and government services, thereby contributing to inclusive rural development.

Economic Contribution

Although infrastructure development did not immediately generate significant increases in household income, respondents acknowledged that construction activities created temporary employment opportunities for local residents. Community members were frequently involved in construction projects, allowing them to earn additional income during implementation.

One participant stated:

"Whenever infrastructure projects are implemented, employment opportunities become available for residents who currently do not have permanent jobs."

However, respondents also emphasized that the primary benefits of infrastructure development were reflected in improved daily activities rather than immediate economic gains.

Another respondent explained:

"The impact on household income may not be immediately noticeable, but the infrastructure greatly facilitates our daily activities."

These findings suggest that infrastructure development contributes indirectly to economic welfare by improving productivity, accessibility, and the efficiency of community activities rather than through immediate increases in income.

Environmental Improvement

Infrastructure development has also positively influenced environmental conditions within the village. The construction of retaining walls, waste collection facilities, drainage improvements, and public lighting has enhanced environmental cleanliness, safety, and the overall appearance of the village.

One community member observed:

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"Compared with previous years, the village environment is now much more organized and visually attractive."
This finding indicates that infrastructure development contributes not only to physical connectivity but also to environmental sustainability and public comfort. Improved environmental quality may further strengthen community satisfaction and encourage greater public participation in maintaining village facilities.

Community Support for Development Programs

Community attitudes toward Village Fund implementation were generally positive. Respondents expressed strong support for infrastructure development because the projects addressed practical needs and generated visible improvements in their daily lives.
One participant stated:
"People here are enthusiastic whenever infrastructure projects are implemented because these projects are genuinely needed."
The high level of community acceptance reflects the effectiveness of participatory planning mechanisms. Development projects that correspond closely to local priorities are more likely to receive public support and encourage collective responsibility for maintaining completed infrastructure.

Implementation Challenges

Despite the positive outcomes, several implementation challenges remain. According to village officials, limited financial resources and unfavorable weather conditions occasionally delayed construction activities and reduced implementation efficiency.
One village official explained that budget limitations prevented the village government from implementing all proposed projects simultaneously, making project prioritization necessary. In addition, heavy rainfall during the construction period sometimes interrupted field activities and extended project completion schedules.
These findings indicate that although the Village Fund policy has been implemented effectively, continuous improvements in planning, budgeting, and risk management are required to ensure sustainable infrastructure development.

4.4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Village Fund policy has been implemented effectively in supporting infrastructure development in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency. Policy effectiveness was reflected in the achievement of development objectives, the implementation of participatory planning mechanisms, compliance with existing regulations, and the tangible benefits perceived by the local community. These findings indicate that the Village Fund has functioned not only as a fiscal transfer mechanism but also as an instrument for promoting inclusive rural development through community participation and accountable governance. The effectiveness identified in this study is consistent with Steers' Organizational Effectiveness Theory, which argues that organizational effectiveness is determined by the extent to which organizational objectives are achieved through efficient resource utilization, effective coordination, stakeholder participation, and adaptive management (Steers, 1977). In the context of Balumbung Village, these dimensions were evident throughout the planning, implementation, and monitoring stages of Village Fund management. Development priorities were formulated through village deliberation meetings (*Musyawarah Desa*), where community members actively participated in identifying infrastructure needs and determining development priorities. Such participatory mechanisms ensured that infrastructure projects addressed actual community needs while simultaneously strengthening public trust in village governance.

The findings further support the principles of Good Governance, which emphasize participation, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency as fundamental components of successful public policy implementation. The interviews revealed that village authorities consistently disseminated information regarding development programs before project implementation and encouraged community involvement throughout project execution and supervision. This participatory approach increased transparency while strengthening social accountability, thereby minimizing opportunities for misuse of Village Fund resources. Consequently, policy effectiveness was influenced not only by administrative compliance but also by the quality of interactions between government institutions and local communities.

From the implementation perspective, infrastructure development represented the dominant priority in Village Fund utilization. Investments in road rehabilitation, clean water facilities, retaining walls, public lighting, and water distribution systems substantially improved public accessibility and the provision of essential public services. These findings are consistent with the rural development theory proposed by Todaro and Smith (2021), which argues that infrastructure investment constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable economic development because it enhances productivity, facilitates market access, and improves the quality of life of rural populations. In Balumbung Village, improved infrastructure reduced transportation barriers, facilitated daily mobility, increased access to clean water, and created a more conducive environment for socioeconomic activities. The study also reveals that the benefits of infrastructure development extended beyond improvements in physical facilities. Community members reported that infrastructure projects generated temporary employment opportunities during construction and improved environmental quality through better village organization and public utilities. Although respondents indicated that direct increases in household income were relatively limited, they consistently emphasized that infrastructure improvements significantly enhanced their daily activities and overall living conditions. These findings suggest that the socioeconomic benefits of Village Fund investments are primarily indirect, emerging through increased accessibility, improved public services, and enhanced community productivity rather than immediate increases in household income.

The present findings are consistent with previous empirical studies examining Village Fund effectiveness. Irmansyah (2021) reported that Village Fund implementation in Rompu Village successfully achieved policy objectives through appropriate implementation, accurate targeting, supportive institutional environments, and effective collaboration among village governments, communities, local governments, and private stakeholders. Similarly, this study found that infrastructure development in Balumbung Village was implemented according to planning documents, targeted priority community needs, and was supported by active cooperation between village authorities and local residents. Such similarities suggest that participatory governance has become one of the principal determinants of successful Village Fund implementation across different rural contexts in Indonesia. Furthermore, the findings corroborate those reported by Yunia Novita Sari (2017), who concluded that Village Fund policies significantly contributed to improving rural infrastructure and public facilities. However, her study also found that increases in household income were largely influenced by community entrepreneurial activities rather than Village Fund programs alone. Comparable evidence emerged in the present study, where respondents acknowledged that infrastructure development substantially improved accessibility and facilitated economic activities but did not immediately generate significant increases in personal income. This finding indicates that infrastructure investment primarily creates enabling conditions for economic development rather than producing direct financial benefits in the short term. An important contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that the effectiveness of Village Fund policies should not be evaluated solely based on financial realization or the completion of physical infrastructure projects. Instead, policy effectiveness should be assessed using multidimensional indicators encompassing participatory governance, institutional transparency, accountability, implementation quality, community satisfaction, and the sustainability of development outcomes. This broader perspective contributes to the growing literature on decentralized fiscal governance by emphasizing that successful rural development depends equally on institutional capacity and community participation.

Despite these positive findings, several implementation challenges remain. Budget limitations prevented the simultaneous implementation of all proposed infrastructure projects, while unfavorable weather conditions occasionally delayed construction schedules. These constraints indicate that policy effectiveness remains dependent on external environmental factors beyond administrative capacity. Therefore, strengthening institutional planning, improving risk management strategies, and enhancing the technical capabilities of village governments remain critical for maximizing the long-term effectiveness of Village Fund utilization. Overall, this study confirms that the Village Fund policy has played a significant role in accelerating rural infrastructure development and improving community welfare in Balumbung Village. The successful implementation of the policy demonstrates that decentralized fiscal transfers can effectively support sustainable rural development when accompanied by participatory planning, transparent governance, accountable financial management, and continuous community involvement. These findings provide valuable empirical evidence for policymakers seeking to strengthen Village Fund governance and improve rural development policies throughout Indonesia.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of the Village Fund policy in improving infrastructure development in Balumbung Village, Tompobulu District, Bantaeng Regency. The findings demonstrate that the Village Fund policy has been implemented effectively through participatory planning, transparent governance, accountable financial management, and active community involvement. Infrastructure development financed through the Village Fund has successfully improved public accessibility, clean water availability, road conditions, environmental quality, and public facilities that directly support community welfare. The effectiveness of the policy was reflected not only in the completion of infrastructure projects but also in the consistency between planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. Community participation throughout village deliberation meetings, implementation activities, and project supervision strengthened transparency and accountability while ensuring that development priorities corresponded to actual community needs. These findings indicate that effective Village Fund management depends on institutional capacity, collaborative governance, and sustained public participation rather than merely financial resource allocation. Although infrastructure development generated substantial social benefits, several implementation challenges remain, including budget constraints and external factors such as unfavorable weather conditions that occasionally delayed project completion. Nevertheless, these challenges did not significantly reduce the overall effectiveness of the Village Fund policy in achieving its primary development objectives.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature on public policy implementation and decentralized fiscal governance by extending the application of Organizational Effectiveness Theory and Good Governance principles to the evaluation of Village Fund policies at the local government level. The findings demonstrate that policy effectiveness should be assessed using multidimensional indicators encompassing participatory governance, transparency, accountability, implementation quality, institutional capacity, and community satisfaction rather than relying solely on financial realization or physical infrastructure outputs. Furthermore, this study enriches the rural development literature by providing empirical evidence that infrastructure investment contributes primarily to improved accessibility, public services, and community productivity, while its economic impacts tend to emerge indirectly over time through enhanced development opportunities.

5.3. Practical Implications

The findings provide several practical implications for policymakers, village governments, and other stakeholders responsible for Village Fund management. First, village governments should continue strengthening participatory planning mechanisms to ensure that development priorities accurately reflect community needs. Active community participation throughout planning, implementation, and evaluation should remain a central component of Village Fund governance. Second, improving the managerial and administrative capacity of village officials is essential for increasing implementation efficiency, financial accountability, and project sustainability. Capacity-building programs related to financial management, infrastructure planning, and project supervision should therefore receive greater institutional support. Third, transparency mechanisms should be further strengthened through accessible public information systems, regular financial reporting, and community-based monitoring to reinforce public trust while minimizing opportunities for financial mismanagement. Finally, greater attention should be devoted to post-construction infrastructure maintenance to ensure that Village Fund investments continue generating long-term socioeconomic benefits for rural communities.

5.4. Policy Implications

The results suggest that the effectiveness of the Village Fund policy can be further improved through stronger coordination between central, provincial, district, and village governments. Future policy reforms should emphasize institutional strengthening, integrated development planning, performance-based budgeting, and systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Such improvements would increase the sustainability of infrastructure investments while enhancing the contribution of Village Funds to national rural development objectives.

5.5. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted exclusively in Balumbung Village, limiting the generalizability of the findings to villages with different socioeconomic, geographical, and institutional characteristics. Second, the qualitative research design emphasizes contextual understanding rather than statistical inference, preventing broader quantitative generalization. Third, the study focused primarily on infrastructure development and did not comprehensively examine other Village Fund sectors such as education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, local economic empowerment, or digital village development.

5.6. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should employ comparative studies involving multiple villages, districts, or provinces to identify institutional factors influencing variations in Village Fund effectiveness across different regional contexts. Mixed-methods and quantitative approaches are also recommended to statistically examine the relationships among governance quality, community participation, financial accountability, infrastructure performance, and socioeconomic development outcomes. Future investigations may further explore the long-term impacts of Village Fund policies on poverty reduction, employment creation, local economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, research examining the role of digital governance, e-government systems, and smart village initiatives in improving Village Fund management would provide valuable insights for strengthening decentralized public administration in Indonesia.

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