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# The Influence of Village Fund Allocation in Improving Skills and Procuring Agriculture Facilities and Infrastructure on Increasing Rural Area Farmers' Income in Muna Regency, Indonesia

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#### **Abstract**

Objective: Rural areas have limited funding to increase farmers' production and income due to limited capital originating from villages due to low farming productivity, inadequate knowledge and technology used by farmers, resulting in low population income and increasing poverty in rural areas. This research aims to analyze the influence of Village Fund allocations in increasing rural farmers' income through increasing farmers' skills in carrying out farming activities and procuring agricultural production facilities for food crops.

Method: This research was carried out in three sub-districts that have potential for food crop farming in Muna Regency, Randomly determine 150 farmers as respondents. Using primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through questionnaires filled out by farmers, in the form of production data, commodity price data, production and marketing cost data, and data on farmers' net income for each planting season. Secondary data is the Village Fund allocation for improving farmers' skills, and the Village Fund allocation for providing agricultural infrastructure for food crops. The analysis model uses multiple linear regression, with three variables (1) village fund budget allocation for improving farmer skills (XI), and (2) Village fund budget allocation for procurement of agricultural facilities for food crops (X2). (3) Average farmer income each planting season (Y). Assumptions: no autocorrelation, norm distribution, and homoscedastic. The two independent variables do not have multicollinearity, if the variance inflation factor (VIF) of each independent variable LXI and LX2 is less than 10. Findings: The results of checking the assumptions of the multiple regression model show that the residual assumptions (autocorrelation, normality, and homoscedasticity) are met. Likewise with the assumption that the two independent variables are met. This means that there is an influence of village fund allocation to improve farmer skills which is valid or believed to be true. Strengthened by the value of the Durbin Watson statistic of 1.100495 which is greater than the R- squared statistical value of 0.937751.

Conclusions: Allocation of Village Funds has a positive effect on increasing the income of rural farmers through improving farmer skills and providing agricultural production facilities in rural areas.

**Keywords:** Village fund allocation rural, agriculture farmers,' skills agricultural, facilities infrastructure, farmers' income, multiple linear regression.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Rural areas have the potential for food crop agricultural resources to enhance economic growth (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2021) and the income of the population (Bununu, 2020). Farming activities in rural areas play a crucial role as the primary driver of economic activities, promoting economic growth and increasing farmers' income (Boni, 2022). Furthermore, farming productivity is determined by the production factors of labor, capital, human capital or knowledge and technology. In reality, segments of society with production function of Q = f(L) coexist with segments with production function of Q = f(L, K, I). This is the cause of income disparities among farmers. The population with the production function of Q = f(L) yields low productivity, while that of Q = f(L, K) and Q = f(L, K, I) can achieve high productivity. This means the differences in production functions lead to productivity disparities, resulting in income disparities and economic inequalities among rural farmers (Boni, 2022).

The success of agricultural development is determined by three essential elements, namely (1) Farmers need to be informed, willing, and able to continuously improve farming practices, which can be achieved through formal education, agricultural extension services, and training programs,

(2) Farming businesses should strive to maintain high productivity through technological advancements, facility and infrastructure enhancements, and management improvements, (3) A supportive government policy system should be established to benefit agricultural development (Padangaran, 2012). Furthermore, Michael et al.(2002) stated that there are three groups of sources for agricultural progress, namely (1) Continuous changes in techniques and innovations to address agricultural issues, (2) Government economic development policies that prioritize agriculture as a leading sector, (3) Social institutions that support agricultural development, such as research, extension, marketing, financial, and insurance institutions.

Aedy et al. (2017) in Boni (2022) stated that (1) the farming land in the rural areas of Muna Regency is highly fertile, indicated by it's ability to yield high production even without fertilization, (2) farmers having a strong work ethic, indicated by working on an average of 10 hours daily on their land. However, reality shows the quantity, quality, and selling price of these products are low, resulting in low farmers' income and persistent poverty in the rural population of Muna Regency. This contradicts the economic theory that fertile land and a strong work ethic among farmers should lead to high agricultural productivity and increased income Todaro et al. (2002).

This study aims to analyze the influence of village fund allocation on increasing rural farmers' income through improving their skills in farming activities and procuring food crop agricultural production facilities in the Regency. Abadi (2000) stated that rural areas have limited resources and funding to enhance agricultural production and farmers' income, primarily due to the limited capital available in the villages (Tariani and Sirajuddin, 2020). The low level of capital formation in rural areas is caused by reduced farming productivity (Setiawan, 2019a). Meanwhile, low productivity is attributed to inadequate knowledge and technology utilized by rural farmers (Adyanto et al., 2019), resulting in low income and increasing levels of poverty.

To address these issues, resource transfers from external sources or autonomous investments are needed (Handoyo et al., 2021). The flow of capital from outside rural areas is intended to provide agricultural facilities and infrastructure, strengthen planning and management skills, as well as enhance strategy for improving production and marketing to increase their income in rural areas (Arsyat et al., 2020). The village fund allocation policy by the Indonesian government in rural areas serves as a strong instrument to improve farmers' skills in their farming activities and procure agricultural

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production facilities, thereby influencing the increase in production and income, ultimately reducing income disparities and poverty.

The novelty of this study lies in the village fund allocation in rural areas of Muna Regency, which increases the number of farmer groups and fosters a strong spirit of cooperation in food crop agriculture among them. Increasing the number of farmer groups and fostering a spirit of cooperation is related to the possession of a friendship relationship network to enhance social connections among individuals forming work groups to improve farming skills. This social capital becomes a driving force in enhancing the productivity of food crop agriculture and increasing farmers' income in the rural areas of this Regency.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In farming activities, there are four factors that influence production, which are land, capital, labor, and management. Production is the output of farming activities, while land, capital, labor, and management are the components directly involved in the production process referred to as input. Farmers always strive to allocate the available production factors efficiently to obtain maximum production and income. The production function of farming activities is formulated as Y = f(X1, X2, ..., Xn). Faisal (2009) stated that ability to manage land in order to achieve high production and income is determined by (1) land use (fertility, size, and location), (2) ease of acquiring human, animal, and mechanical labor, (3) access to capital (bank loans, seeds, fertilizers, medications), (4) agricultural constraints such as crop pests, and (5) ease of marketing products at reasonable prices.

The level of income is influenced by the amount of production obtained by farmers in managing their land during a planting season. Ndruru et al., 2014). stated that four factors affect land productivity which include (1) Fertile land, (2) Farmers' work ethic, (3) Business capital (agricultural facilities and infrastructure), and (4) Farming skills. When the land is fertile, farmers have a strong work ethic, possess business capital, are highly skilled, and are supported by good farming management, it is certain that land productivity, production quality, product selling prices, and rural farmers' income will be high. Vikas Kumar Khare et. el (2023) along with thet, the results of the analysis show the dynamics over the last ten years in economically developing countries. The structural scheme for utilizing the rural environment was developed and designed specifically for agro-industry based on an accounting and analysis system oriented towards increasing agricultural productivity in India.

According to Both et. el, the causes of these farmers' powerlessness in increasing their income are the limitations in accessing product markets, as well as public and credit facilities. It was stated that these limitations are influenced by (1) Economic (lack of capital and low technology possessed by farmers), (2) Socio-cultural (low expertise, education, and skills of farmers), and (3) Geographic and environmental factors (rural area isolation and land infertility).

To address these issues, Padangaran (2012) stated that increasing agricultural production and rural farmers' income requires Community Development. This Community Development combines two forms of strength in society, such as Community Organization and Economic Development, formulated as CD = CO + ED. Furthermore, development emphasizes that people acquire skills, knowledge, and power to improve their quality of life. According to Sedarmayanti (2017), the essence of farmer development is to enable them build farming businesses and improve income. This means they are being empowered, independent, initiative-driven, knowledgeable, motivated, have opportunities, identify and seize opportunities, cooperate and take risks, as well as seek information on farming development, production and income improvement. The

essence of farmer development is to enhance their abilities, foster willingness, and make them more self- reliant in achieving sustainable improvements in economic, social, physical, and mental well-being.

This development model aligns with the objectives of the village fund allocation policy to rural farmers, namely improving their abilities and skills, fostering their willingness, and making them more self-reliant in achieving sustainable improvements in economic, social, physical, and mental well-being. Through the village fund allocation, they can enhance their skills in conducting farming activities with guidance, develop farming systems, facilities, and infrastructure to increase production, facilitate access to scientific knowledge, technology, and information, as well as strengthen institutions that can sustainably increase income.

Farming management is part of the production factors that coordinate various resources (land, capital, and labor) to achieve optimal output through effective the utilization of the planning, organization, direction, control, coordination (5C), communication, and motivation functions. These five functions connect the manager with the objectives of farming businesses and their

production outcomes, Sedarmayanti (2017). Managers need to perceive farming management as a unified entity in which each function is bound, related, and aligned with one another. Motivation acts as the driving force to carry out the functions of farming management and generates movement, thereby allowing these functions to continuously progress. Meanwhile, communication serves as the hub around which all farming management revolves. Without effective communication, management cannot function properly and becomes a source of failure in farming activities.

Rustiadi, E., & Nasution, A, (2017), Rural farmers possess potential resources related to their ownership of institutional relationship networks, friendliness, mutual sympathy, as well as social relationships among individuals and families that form social working groups. This includes cooperation in the agricultural sector and a high work ethic. The social capital built from the cultural heritage of the community has an impact on increasing agricultural productivity and rural their income. Thuy Thanh Dao et. el (2023), The results of the analysis of the binary logistic regression model show that there are five factors that influence rural employment transitions, (i) Gender; (ii) Age; (iii) Education and skills level; (iv) Use of compensation money; (v) Regional development guidelines and policies. The level of education and skills are the factors that have the strongest influence on the transition of rural workers in the Nghi Son Economic Zone, Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam.

The problem of this study lies in rural areas having fertile agricultural land, a strategically located geographic position for product marketing, and a high work ethic among farmers. However, they lack farming skills and have very poor management. The implementation of the village fund allocation policy in rural agricultural development has the benefit of realizing more equitable development. This is achieved by creating increased employment opportunities, boosting agricultural production, improving farmers' income, and reducing poverty.

Based on the problem and objectives, this study uses a causal method to analyze the influence of dependent and independent variables. It examines the causal relationship and the influence of village fund allocation on production and income improvement through the enhancement of farmers' skills and the procurement of agricultural production facilities. This analysis was conducted through quantitative testing or verifying the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

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# 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

## 3.1. Samples and Data Collection

This study was conducted from February 14 to June 22, 2022, in 3 sub-districts of Muna Regency, with the potential for developing food crop agriculture. The sample was taken from 6 villages, representing 16.67% of the total number of villages in the sub-districts. According to Sugiyono (2016), a sample size of 10% of the total population is sufficient for study with homogeneous characteristics. A total of 150 farmers were randomly selected as respondents from the 6 sample villages.

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained through questionnaires filled out by farmers, encompassing information on food crop agricultural production every 6 months (semester), prices of food crop commodities, production and marketing costs of food crop commodities, as well as farmers' net income every 6 months (semester) from 2015 to 2021. The food crop agricultural practices in rural areas of Muna Regency follow a biannual planting/harvesting season, in accordance with local culture. On the other hand, secondary data consisted of village fund allocation for improving farmers' skills in farming activities as well as funds for procuring food crop agricultural facilities and infrastructure. Data analysis was conducted using the following model and method.

# 3.2. Model Analysis

This study employed three variables, consisting of two independent and one dependent. The independent variables were (1) Village fund allocation for improving farmers' skills in farming activities, including expert assistance for planning from land preparation to post-harvest, as well as education and training in farming skills, denoted as X1, and (2) Village fund allocation for procuring food crop agricultural production facilities, such as fertilizers, medicines, and superior seeds, denoted as X2. Meanwhile, the dependent variable was the average income of farmers obtained from farming activities in each planting season within one year, denoted as Y.

The analysis employed was a multiple linear regression model with the following equation:

$$Y = a + b1lX1 + b2lX2 + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

where a, b1, and b2 were the parameters of the regression equation. The variables lX1 and lX2 were the natural logarithm forms of X1 and X2. The error or residual  $\varepsilon$  in model (1) was assumed to have the following characteristics, namely, it has no autocorrelation, normally distributed, and homoscedastic. Furthermore, the two independent variables should not have multicollinearity, which is confirmed when the variance inflation factor (VIF) of lX1 and lX2 is less than 10.

# 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# 4.1. Results

The estimation results of equation (1) are summarized in Table 1, which showed that the coefficient of the variable lX1 was significant at 10% significance level, while variable lX2 was insignificant. This indicated a significant influence of village fund allocation for improving farmers' skills, while there was no significant influence on procuring agricultural facilities and infrastructure.

Table 1. Estimation results on model (1)

Variable and intercept	Coefficient	t-Statistic	Prob.
$lX_1$	0.917570	1.878368	0.0871
$lX_2$	0.374594	0.881992	0.3966
C	-1.278630	-0.864646	0.4057
R-squared	0.937751		
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		
Durbin-Watson stat	1.100495		
Jarque Bera (JB)	0.545226		
Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:	0.1226		
Heteroskedasticity Test: ARCH	0.1802		

The VIF coefficient estimation results presented in Table 2 show that the VIF values of the 2 independent variables are less than 10. This showed the 2 independent variables lX1 and lX2 in equation (1) do not exhibit multicollinearity.

Table 2. VIF values on model (1)

Variable	Coefficient Variance	VIF
$lX_1$	0.238625	9.96773
$lX_2$	0.180382	9.96773

The examination assumptions of residuals (autocorrelation, normality, and homoscedasticity) and the 2 independent variables were fulfilled. This indicated that the influence of village fund allocation for improving farmers' skills was valid. This was further supported by the Durbin- Watson statistic of 1.100495, which was greater than the R-squared statistic of 0.937751. The comparison of these 2 statistics indicated that model (1) was not a spurious multiple regression equation.

## 4.2. Discussion

This study showed village fund allocation for improving skills had an influence on farmers' income. The coefficient of this independent variable was 0.917570, indicating a positive influence of village fund allocation for improving skills on rural farmers' income in Muna Regency. Every 1% increase in village fund allocation for improving farming skills increased rural farmers' income by 0.917570%. This increase in income was influenced by development programs that enhanced farming skills and improved the work ethic of rural farmers. These conclusions were consistent with Bresciani (2007) in Arham and Hatu (2020), who suggested that farmer development enabled them to be capable, independent, initiative-driven, knowledgeable, motivated, and able to identify and utilize opportunities, cooperate, take risks, as well as seek agricultural development information, thereby increasing production and income. Similarly, Christiansen et al. (2011)

showed that enhancing the abilities of rural farmers in improving their skills in land and farming management from planning to post-harvest had increased income and alleviated poverty. Damuri, Yose and Day (2015) also found that post-reform agricultural development policies in rural areas of Indonesia, through skill improvement in farming management, had proven to increase production, increase farmers' income, and reduce poverty in rural areas.

Food crop agricultural production in the study area showed an increase in village fund allocation from 2015 to 2021. This can be attributed to the improved skills in farming activities, resulting in an increase in rural farmers' income in Muna Regency. These conclusions aligned with Bresciani, el al. (2007) in Arham and Payu (2019), that improving farmers' skills in farming activities increased production beyond the rural food

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requirements. The surplus food production not only increased farmers' income but also helped reduce poverty among the rural population.

The data analysis results showed that village fund allocation in Muna Regency increased farmers' income through skill improvement in land management and the enhancement of farming management from planning to post-harvest. This was supported by Abadi (2000), that rural areas had limited resources and funding to empower farmers' skill improvement and enhance farming management to increase income. This limitation was due to the insufficient capital in rural areas (Tariani and Sirajuddin, 2020), and low farming productivity (Setiawan, 2019a). Low productivity can be attributed to inadequate farming skills and management as well as insufficient technology used by rural farmers (Adyanto et al., 2019).

The policy of allocating village funds for farmer development, with the aim of enhancing skills in food crop agricultural activities had successfully increased rural farmers' income in Muna Regency. This was in line with Mukmin et el. (2019) in Saragi et al. (2021), highlighting the need for budget support from the government and the private sector to empower rural farmers in improving farming skills and management, leading to increased production, farmers' income, and poverty reduction. Similarly, Ajayi et al. (2011) found that budget allocation for empowering farmers' skills increased income and well-being in rural areas of Africa. In line with this conclusion, Damuri and Day (2015) stated that post-reform agricultural development policies in rural areas of Indonesia, through the improvement of farming skills and management, had proven to increase production, raise farmers' income, and reduce the number of people living in poverty. Mellor and Ranade (2012) highlighted why agricultural development dominated poverty reduction in lowincome countries. The results showed that agricultural resources in developing countries possessed great potential in terms of land area and fertility. Farmers in these regions can be easily empowered to improve their farming skills, thereby accelerating income growth and reducing poverty among the population. These conclusions were in line with Yudhoyono (2004), highlighting agricultural and rural development as efforts to address poverty and unemployment.

Moreover, government budget allocation for agricultural development in rural areas was highly effective in combating unemployment, increasing farmers' income, and alleviating poverty.

This study found that the coefficient of village fund allocation was 0.374594, with a positive but insignificant value. Therefore, an increase in village fund allocation for procuring agricultural facilities and infrastructure did not significantly drive farmers' income. This may be due to the allocated fund for facilities and infrastructure not adequately meeting the needs of farmers in managing their agricultural activities. It was also found that the procurement of facilities, such as fertilizers and medications was not optimally utilized by rural farmers in Muna Regency due to their limited knowledge of fertilizer application. As a result, these farmers still rely on highly fertile land to produce their food crops. This was in line with Spielman et al. (2007) regarding Agricultural Innovation, System Opportunities and Constraints, as well as Reversing Rural Poverty in Ethiopia, where the limited use of agricultural technologies, such as fertilizers can be attributed to the inadequate knowledge in their application and insufficient transportation facilities in agricultural locations. Ethiopian farmers are more focused on improving skills and work ethic to increase production as well as explore opportunities for investment or expanding the business beyond the agricultural sector, consequently reducing poverty in rural areas.

The probability statistic F showed that both variables, village fund allocation for improving farmers' skills as well as village fund allocation for procuring food crop agricultural facilities and infrastructure, simultaneously increased income with a

contribution of 93.78%, while the remaining 6.32% was influenced by other factors. The analysis of the probability statistic F showed a strong influence of improving skills and procuring food crop agricultural facilities and infrastructure on increasing rural farmers' income in Muna Regency.

# 5. CONCLUSION

This study showed that village fund allocation for improving skills had an influence on farmers' income. The coefficient of this variable was 0.917570, indicating a positive influence of village fund allocation for improving skills on rural farmers' income in Muna Regency. This indicated that a 1% increase in village fund allocation for improving skills will increase rural farmers' income by 0.917570%. Farmer development through village fund allocation enables them to take initiative, collaborate, seek agricultural development information, and be motivated to improve their abilities and skills in managing farming land from planning to post-harvest. This will increase food crop production and rural farmers' income in Muna Regency. It was also found that the coefficient of village fund allocation for procuring agricultural facilities and infrastructure was 0.374594, with a positive but insignificant value. Therefore, an increase in village fund allocation for procuring facilities and infrastructure did not significantly contribute to farmers' income. This is because the allocated fund did not fulfill the needs of rural farmers in managing farming land until post-harvest and product marketing. In addition, the procurement of facilities, such as fertilizers and medications was not optimally utilized by rural farmers due to their limited knowledge of fertilizer application.

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