



Improving Education Quality through the Village Fund Scholarship Program: A Theory of Effectiveness Perspective (A Study in Balielo Village, Bola District, Wajo Regency)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Village Fund scholarship program in improving the quality of education for the community in Balielo Village, Bola District, Wajo Regency. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using effectiveness theory, which includes target accuracy, socialization, objectives, and program monitoring. The results show that the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village is quite effective, especially in terms of target accuracy, socialization, and objectives, where assistance is provided to underprivileged communities and reduces the dropout rate. However, the monitoring aspect is still not optimal because village officials have not been maximally supervising the use of funds by recipients. Thus, although the program has made a positive contribution to improving the quality of education, strengthening the monitoring function is necessary to achieve the overall effectiveness of the program.

INTRODUCTION

Village development has become the main focus in efforts to achieve equitable development across Indonesia. As the smallest administrative entity, villages play a very important role, not only as policy implementers, but also as drivers of development based on local potential. For many years, villages were often viewed as objects of development. However, a paradigm shift has encouraged villages to take on an active role in designing, implementing, and evaluating development in their communities.

A new chapter in village development in Indonesia was marked by the issuance of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages. Village funds are budgets allocated by the Indonesian government to villages throughout the country. The main objective of this program is to increase village independence and improve the welfare of communities at the local level. These funds are given directly to village governments so that they can be used for infrastructure development, community capacity building, village economic development, and the provision of basic services for residents. With this policy, villages receive stronger support in carrying out their governmental and development functions. One of the main instruments provided is the Village Fund, which is allocated directly from the central government to villages each year. Through this mechanism, villages not only receive significant funding but also have the opportunity to manage and direct development in accordance with the needs and potential of their region.

The relatively large allocation of village funds provides an opportunity to accelerate development while improving the welfare of rural communities. Whereas previously villages were only positioned as objects of policy and development implementation, now villages have a role as subjects of development with broader authority and scope to design policies and implement development independently (Chasanah et al., 2017).

The change in the status of villages has important consequences for governance. Villages are no longer mere recipients of policies from above, but also play a role in designing and implementing development that is in line with the characteristics of their region. This situation confirms that strengthening the capacity of villages is an integral part of efforts to achieve effective governance and sustainable development. In the current system of government, villages occupy a strategic position and play an important role as partners of local governments in the administration of government, including in the field of development (Armel et al., 2023). Gamara (2024) emphasizes that village funds have a vital function as a source of financing that can support various programs to promote village development and community empowerment. Its use includes the development of basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and irrigation; improving the quality of education and health; strengthening the local economy through MSME training and business capital assistance; and preserving village culture and customs as local identity and wealth.

In line with this, Oka (2020) explains that the implementation of village funds in various sectors has had a real impact on the community. In the physical development sector, village funds are used for the construction of farm roads, opening access to remote areas, installing lighting, and repairing

irrigation systems. In the health sector, the funds have been used to build integrated health service posts (*posyandu*) in every hamlet and to provide health education by bringing in medical personnel from the city center. Meanwhile, in the economic sector, village funds have been directed towards rebuilding traditional markets and forming Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), such as cooperatives, to support local economic activities.

Various implementations of village funds that have been carried out show great potential in strengthening development and community empowerment at the local level. However, the success of these programs does not depend only on the size of the budget allocated, but also on how policies are formulated and adapted to the needs of the village community. In other words, innovation and creativity are needed both in the policy formulation stage and in its implementation in the field so that the use of village funds is truly effective.

In the context of village funds, Ruslimin (2024) offers a model that can be optimized through encouragement to continue to be creative and innovative, especially for policy makers at the local level in formulating alternative policies. Furthermore, innovation also needs to be demonstrated by policy implementers at the lower levels by adjusting the programs carried out to suit local conditions. However, the entire process must still be carried out responsibly and focused on achieving the targeted results.

The innovative model for village fund management proposed by Ruslimin (2024) opens up opportunities for village governments to develop more adaptive policies in line with community needs. One area that is highly relevant to the basic needs of the community is the education sector. The use of village funds in this area not only serves as a long-term investment in improving the quality of human resources, but also represents a tangible form of village support for the national vision of improving the intelligence of the nation. In the education sector, as a form of support for this goal, the village government plays a role by channeling financial assistance to support the implementation of education. This has become the mandate of the 1945 Constitution, namely to educate the nation. The scholarship program is intended for students who are economically disadvantaged but have good academic and non-academic achievements. This program is funded by village funds, with the aim of supporting a more decent life for underprivileged citizens who have the determination and enthusiasm to continue their education (Wulandari et al., 2022).

The practice of distributing scholarships sourced from Village Funds has also been implemented in a number of regions in Indonesia. For example, the Aketobololo Village Government, Oba Tengah District, Tidore Kepulauan City, through the Village Head, distributes scholarship programs for outstanding students as a form of appreciation and support for children who have achieved outstanding results (Din, 2024). Similarly, the Palae Village Government, South Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency, implemented a scholarship program for outstanding elementary school students by utilizing the Village Fund allocation as an effort to improve the quality of education (Trust Media, 2022). The Air

Lengit Village Government, Bunguran Tengah District, Natuna Regency, has taken a similar approach by distributing scholarships to high-achieving elementary and junior high school students (Subayang & Adnin, 2024).

The experiences of these villages prove that Village Funds can be a strategic instrument in improving the quality of education through scholarship programs. This indicates that there are significant opportunities for other villages to adopt similar policies tailored to their local needs and characteristics. Thus, studies on the use of Village Funds in the field of education, particularly through scholarship programs, are relevant for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Program Effectiveness

The success of a program or policy is determined not only by the amount of resources allocated, but also by the extent to which the planned objectives can be achieved. Therefore, a measure is needed to assess the success of program implementation objectively. One concept often used to assess this success is effectiveness. Effectiveness can be understood as the degree of success in achieving the specified output targets. It is measured by comparing the planned output in the budget with the actual output. An activity is considered effective if the results achieved meet or even exceed the specified targets (Schemerhorn, in Kiwang et al., 2015).

This definition emphasizes the importance of achieving program targets as a measure of effectiveness. However, from another perspective, effectiveness is not only viewed from the comparison between plans and realizations, but also from the extent to which the objectives that have been set are actually achieved. Effectiveness is something that shows the degree to which an objective has been achieved (Asiah, 2016). Asiah's (2016) view confirms that effectiveness is essentially closely related to the level of achievement of planned objectives. This means that a program or activity is considered effective if the predetermined objectives can actually be realized. In line with this, effectiveness is a state in which there is a match between the previously set goals and objectives and the results achieved (Erawati et al., 2017). This definition further emphasizes that effectiveness is closely related to the achievement of predetermined goals. Thus, effectiveness is not only measured in terms of output, but also in terms of the relevance of the results obtained to the objectives to be achieved. The definition of effectiveness, according to Ilham and Yunita (2022), strengthens the conceptual framework, particularly in terms of assessing the extent to which scholarships have a real impact on the quality of education of their recipients.

Ilham and Yunita (2022) emphasize that the effectiveness of a program can be seen from the real impact it has, especially in the context of improving the quality of education for beneficiaries. This is in line with the view that effectiveness is not only related to the achievement of objectives, but also the accuracy of the targets in their implementation. Target accuracy is an important factor that determines the success or failure of a program. A program can be said to be effective if it is in accordance with the predetermined targets, based on agreed rules (Najidah & Lestrasi, 2019).

In general, program effectiveness can be understood as a measure of the success of an activity in achieving its predetermined goals and objectives. Effectiveness is not only seen from the alignment between the plan and the realization of the output (Schemerhorn, in Kiwang et al., 2015), but also from the level of achievement of the formulated objectives (Asiah, 2016; Erawati et al., 2017). In the context of education, effectiveness emphasizes the extent to which a program is able to have a real impact on the quality of the beneficiaries (Ilham & Yunita, 2022). In addition, effectiveness is also largely determined by the accuracy of the target, namely, whether the program actually reaches the priority groups in accordance with the agreed rules (Najidah & Lestrasi, 2019).

Based on these various opinions, it can be understood that effectiveness encompasses the achievement of objectives, the conformity of results with planning, and the accuracy of program targets. However, to assess effectiveness more operationally, indicators are needed that can clearly measure the success of a program. In this case, Budiani (2007) offers an evaluation framework that can be used to assess the effectiveness of a program, including scholarship programs, through four main indicators, namely:

1. Accuracy of program targets: Describes the extent to which program recipients match the previously set targets or objectives.
2. Accuracy of program socialization: Indicates the ability of implementers to convey information about the program, both to the general public and to specific target groups, so that the program's message can be well understood.
3. Accuracy of program objectives: Refers to the alignment between the results achieved from program implementation and the objectives formulated at the outset.
4. Program monitoring accuracy: This refers to follow-up activities after the program has been implemented, as a form of attention to participants to ensure that program implementation and results remain in line with the plan.

Scholarship Program

Education is a basic need that plays an important role in improving the quality of human resources. However, not all individuals have the same opportunity to access education due to economic constraints. To bridge this problem, one of the efforts taken is through the provision of scholarships. Scholarships are a form of support so that students can continue their education without being fully burdened by financial problems.

In general, scholarships are a form of educational assistance provided to students or university students as support so that they can continue their education. According to Surya (2015), a scholarship is a form of financial assistance given to individuals, students, or pupils to continue their education. This definition shows that scholarships are essentially an important instrument in ensuring the continuity of education for students. With scholarships, it is hoped that economic barriers can be overcome so that students can focus more on their education.

According to Putra & Hardiyanti (2011), a scholarship is a form of financial assistance given to individuals for the purpose of continuing their education. From this understanding, it can be concluded that scholarships not only serve as financial assistance but also as an effort to maintain the continuity of education so that students can continue their studies properly. This social function emphasizes that scholarships play a strategic role in supporting more equitable access to education. Liesnaningsih (2020) states that scholarship programs are held to ease the burden on students in pursuing their studies.

Based on the above, scholarships can be understood as a form of financial assistance provided to students to support the continuity of their education. Surya (2015) refers to scholarships as educational cost support so that students can continue their studies. Putra & Hardiyanti (2011) emphasize that scholarships are directed at individuals with the main objective of ensuring the continuity of education. Meanwhile, Liesnaningsih (2020) affirms the social function of scholarships, namely to ease the burden of education costs borne by students. In line with this, Wulandari et al. (2022) add that scholarships can also be targeted at those who are economically disadvantaged but have academic and non-academic achievements.

From these various definitions, it can be concluded that scholarships are financial assistance programs that serve as incentives, given to students to support the continuity of education, increasing motivation to learn, and opening up wider opportunities for underprivileged and high-achieving groups to obtain a better education.

Quality of Education

Education is not only focused on access and equity, but also on how its quality can be guaranteed. The quality of education is an important aspect because it is directly related to the success of educational institutions in achieving their objectives. Therefore, the discussion on quality is relevant to understanding the extent to which the educational process can produce the expected changes. Etymologically, quality is understood as a process of improvement towards a better or more stable condition. This is because quality reflects the value, weight, or level of something. The quality of education can be understood as the implementation of the educational process in an institution, which shows the extent to which the institution has succeeded in achieving its educational goals (Supriyanto, in Sinambela, 2017). Thus, the quality of education can be seen as a measure of success in achieving the objectives that have been set, both in terms of the process and the results achieved.

Definition of Village Funds

In order to encourage equitable development and improve community welfare, the Indonesian government has established a policy of allocating a special budget for villages. This policy was created as an effort to strengthen the capacity of villages to be able to govern independently while optimizing their local potential. To that end, the government has introduced Village Funds as a fiscal instrument that is expected to be a driving force for development at the lowest level. Village Funds are budgets derived from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget and allocated to villages, which are distributed through transfers to the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget of the regency or

city. These funds are used to support village administration, development, community development, and community empowerment activities (Hurriyaturohman et al., 2021). This definition confirms that Village Funds are essentially a fiscal instrument designed to strengthen governance and development at the village level. However, more specifically, several experts explain the sources and percentage requirements of Village Funds allocated by the government.

According to Veronica & Winarni (2020), the Village Fund is a budget allocated by the government to villages and sourced from the State Budget. This fund comes from the Financial Balance Fund between the Central and Regional Governments, with a minimum allocation of 10%. Thus, the Village Fund can be understood as a government policy instrument sourced from the state budget and allocated specifically to villages through a transfer mechanism to the district/city budget. Its presence is not only intended to support the administration of village governance, but also to strengthen development, community development, and local economic empowerment. Overall, the Village Fund is one of the important pillars in realizing the independence and improving the welfare of rural communities.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in Balielo Village, Bola District, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi Province. This location was chosen purposively, considering that Balielo Village is one of the villages that allocates Village Funds for educational scholarship programs. The presence of this program is interesting to study because it is directly related to efforts to improve the quality of human resources through education.

A study conducted requires the use of appropriate methods (Patmasari, 2022; Patmasari & Ilham, 2024). The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth information about the effectiveness of the implementation of the Village Fund scholarship program and the factors that hinder its implementation. Using case studies, this research attempts to understand the phenomenon that occurs comprehensively in the real context of Balielo Village.

The focus of the research is directed at two main things. First, examining the extent to which the Village Fund scholarship program plays a role in improving the quality of education for the community in Balielo Village. Second, identifying the inhibiting factors that affect the implementation of the program so that the results are not yet fully optimal.

The data in this study were obtained through several techniques. Observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of the program and its impact in the field. In-depth interviews were used to obtain information from various parties, such as the village head, village officials, Village Fund managers, scholarship recipients, and community leaders. Meanwhile, documentation was collected from other supporting documents. In addition, a literature study was conducted to support research data relevant to the study topic (Tebay & Ilham, 2023; Patmasari, 2022).

The data analysis process refers to the Miles and Huberman model (in Ilham et al., 2020), which consists of three stages. First, data reduction, which involves selecting and focusing on information according to the research needs. Second, data presentation, which involves compiling the findings in the form of narratives or tables to make them easier to understand. Third, drawing conclusions, which involves formulating findings that answer the research focus based on verified data. To maintain data validity, this study uses source and method triangulation. This is done by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, while also involving various informants from different backgrounds to ensure the objectivity and validity of the data obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of the Village Fund Scholarship Program in Improving the Quality of Education

Effectiveness is an important aspect in every activity or program because it is directly related to the achievement of predetermined goals and objectives. A program can be said to be effective if the results achieved are in line with the objectives that were formulated from the outset. In the context of this study, the effectiveness of the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village was analyzed using Budiani's (2007) theoretical framework, which emphasizes four main indicators, namely target accuracy, socialization accuracy, goal accuracy, and program monitoring accuracy.

- a. Program Target Accuracy: One indicator of effectiveness is target accuracy. To assess this, it is necessary to see whether the program actually reaches the priority groups. From the results of interviews with informants, it is known that the distribution of scholarships is in accordance with the target, which is aimed at residents who are economically disadvantaged. This shows that the program has been running in accordance with the initial objectives set.
- b. Accuracy of Program Dissemination: The interviews showed that the village government had disseminated information about the program quite well. Information about the scholarships was not only conveyed through official forums, such as village meetings, but also through direct approaches to the community (door-to-door) when necessary. This method was considered effective because it was able to reach residents more comprehensively and ensure that the information reached those who needed it.
- c. Accuracy of Program Objectives: The accuracy of the program objectives is in line with the accuracy of the targets. Based on the results of the study, the objectives of this scholarship program are considered very positive. The program is perceived as beneficial by the community because it helps ease the burden of their children's education. In addition, the existence of the scholarship program also contributes to reducing the dropout rate in the village, so that the initial objectives of the program can be said to have been achieved.

- d. Accuracy of Program Monitoring: Based on monitoring indicators, the implementation of the Village Fund scholarship program still has weaknesses. Interviews with the community show that village officials have not been optimal in supervising aid recipients. So far, the village government has tended to distribute funds without ensuring that they are actually used for educational needs. In fact, periodic monitoring should be carried out to ensure that the assistance is used for its intended purpose, especially for the schooling needs of scholarship recipients.

Based on the results of the study, the scholarship program funded by the Village Fund in Balielo Village, Bola District, Wajo Regency, shows a fairly good level of effectiveness, although there are still some weaknesses. In terms of accuracy of target, this program has been running in accordance with its initial objectives, namely to help underprivileged communities in meeting the educational needs of their children. This shows that the distribution of scholarships has reached the priority groups as planned.

Furthermore, in terms of program dissemination, the village government has been successful in communicating information effectively. Not only through official forums such as village meetings, but also through direct approaches to the community (door to door) when necessary. This strategy makes program information easier for residents to understand and access.

In terms of the accuracy of objectives, the scholarship program has proven to provide tangible benefits to the community. This assistance has alleviated the burden of education costs and even contributed to reducing the dropout rate in the village. Thus, the program's objectives can be said to have been achieved as expected. However, based on program monitoring indicators, there are still weaknesses that need attention. Village officials have not optimally supervised the use of scholarships by recipients. So far, management has focused more on distributing assistance without ensuring that the funds are actually used for educational needs. This condition raises the potential for inappropriate use of assistance, which can reduce the overall effectiveness of the program. In general, the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village can be considered quite effective in improving access to and quality of education, especially in terms of targets, socialization, and objectives. However, the monitoring aspect needs to be strengthened so that this program can truly run optimally and have a maximum impact on improving the quality of education for the village community.

Factors Hindering the Village Fund Scholarship Program in Improving the Quality of Education

In its implementation, the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village is not without various obstacles, both those felt by the village government as the implementer and the community as the beneficiaries. Based on interviews with several informants and field observations, there are two main obstacles that affect the effectiveness of this program. First, the limited Village Fund budget is allocated for scholarships. This condition has forced the village government to change the recipients every year, resulting in a lack of

continuity in assistance for some students. Second, delays in the distribution of scholarships often occur and hinder recipients' ability to meet their educational needs promptly.

Efforts to overcome these obstacles have been made by the village government by taking into account input from the community, particularly regarding additional budget allocations so that more students can be helped. In addition, the village government also has an obligation to distribute aid promptly so that the program's goal of supporting the continuity of education for village children can be achieved to the maximum extent possible.

Synthesis of Research Findings with Budiani's Theory

The results of research on the effectiveness of the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village, Bola District, Wajo Regency, can be analyzed in more depth using Budiani's (2007) theory, which emphasizes four main indicators: accuracy of targets, accuracy of socialization, accuracy of objectives, and accuracy of program monitoring.

Based on the first indicator, namely accuracy of targeting, this study found that scholarships had been distributed to the priority group, namely the poor. This is in line with Budiani's theory, which asserts that the effectiveness of a program can be seen from the extent to which the recipients match the targets set. Regarding the second indicator, accuracy of dissemination, the program was deemed quite effective because the village government not only conveyed information through official forums but also conducted direct door-to-door outreach. This practice reinforces Budiani's theory that the success of a program is determined by the implementers' ability to convey information clearly to the community. The third indicator, accuracy of objectives, was also proven in this study. The Village Fund scholarship program provides tangible benefits by helping to ease the burden of education costs on families and reducing dropout rates. This condition shows that there is consistency between the initial objectives and the results achieved, as explained by Budiani.

However, on the fourth indicator, namely monitoring accuracy, this study found weaknesses. Village officials have not fully monitored the use of funds by recipients, so there is a risk that the benefits of the program will not be fully achieved. This is an important note because, according to Budiani, monitoring is an essential part of ensuring the program's continued effectiveness. Thus, the synthesis between theory and findings shows that the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village has been effective in three main indicators, namely targets, socialization, and objectives. However, the monitoring indicator still needs to be strengthened so that the program's effectiveness can be optimally achieved in accordance with Budiani's (2007) theoretical framework.

Table 1. Comparison of Budiani's (2007) Effectiveness Indicators with Research Findings

Effectiveness Indicators (Budiani, 2007)	Theory Description	Research Findings in Balielo Village	Analysis
Target	The effectiveness of the	Scholarships are	On target,

Accuracy	program is measured by the extent to which recipients meet the predetermined targets.	awarded to economically disadvantaged citizens.	because the priority groups are in line with the program's original objectives.
Socialization Accuracy	The effectiveness of the program is determined by the ability of the implementers to convey information in a way that can be understood by the community, especially the target groups.	Socialization was carried out through village meetings and direct approaches (door-to-door).	Effective, because information can reach the public widely and evenly.
Objective Accuracy	Effectiveness is seen from the alignment of program results with the objectives that have been formulated.	The program helps ease the burden of education costs on families and reduces school dropout rates.	The objectives were achieved, and the benefits of the program were immediately felt by the community.
Monitoring Accuracy	Effectiveness is also influenced by post-distribution monitoring activities.	Village officials have not been optimal in monitoring the use of scholarship funds.	Not yet effective, because a lack of supervision can reduce the success of the program.

Source: Budiani (2007) and, processed by researchers, (2025).

From the above description, it can be concluded that Budiani's (2007) theory is relevant to use as an analytical tool to assess the effectiveness of the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village. Three indicators, namely target accuracy, socialization, and objectives, have been well achieved so that the program is able to provide tangible benefits to the community. However, the monitoring indicator still shows weaknesses because the village apparatus has not optimally supervised the use of funds.

Thus, although the Village Fund scholarship program can be categorized as quite effective in supporting improvements in education quality, the monitoring aspect needs to be strengthened so that the program's effectiveness can be achieved comprehensively. This also emphasizes the importance of strengthening the monitoring function in every implementation of a Village Fund-based program.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research conducted, it appears that the effectiveness of the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village has been running quite well. This can be seen from the accuracy of the target recipients, which are indeed aimed at underprivileged families, the diverse socialization of the program, and the program's objectives, which are to ease the burden of education on the community and reduce the dropout rate. However, in terms of monitoring, this program is still not optimal because the village government has not fully supervised the use of scholarship funds. The factors hindering the program include the limited Village Fund budget, which means that scholarship recipients must change every year, and delays in the distribution process. These two factors have an impact on the continuity of assistance and the timeliness of fund utilization by students. Overall, the Village Fund scholarship program in Balielo Village has contributed positively to improving the quality of education for the community, although there are still aspects that need to be improved to make its implementation more effective and sustainable. As a recommendation, village governments need to increase budget allocations for scholarship programs so that more people can receive scholarships on a sustainable basis, rather than having to change recipients every year. In addition, village governments also need to strengthen their monitoring systems to ensure that funds are used appropriately and are actually used for educational purposes. Recipients are expected to use scholarship assistance entirely for their children's education, rather than diverting it to other needs. Public awareness of the importance of education is a supporting factor for the success of this program.

FURTHER STUDY

For further research, it is recommended to conduct a more in-depth study involving comparisons between villages or other regions. This is important to see the effectiveness of the Village Fund scholarship program more broadly and to identify best practices that can be used as a reference in managing Village Fund-based education programs.

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