



A COOPERATIVE BASED VILLAGE OWNED ENTERPRISE (BUMDES) GOVERNANCE MODEL TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

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This study aims to develop a cooperative-based governance model for Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research was conducted at BUMDes Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti using a participatory qualitative approach through literature reviews, field observations, in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a pilot implementation of the governance model. The findings reveal that the application of cooperative principles in BUMDes governance enhances institutional legitimacy, strengthens accountability, and promotes broader community participation. The integration of cooperative values also reduces elite domination, reinforces community ownership, and expands the village's socio-economic impact. Furthermore, the governance model aligns with the achievement of several SDGs, particularly poverty reduction (SDG 1), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). Therefore, the proposed cooperative-based governance model is not only relevant for improving the performance of BUMDes Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti but also has strong potential to be replicated in other BUMDes with adjustments to local contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Village development is a fundamental aspect in realizing inclusive and sustainable national development. Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages provides opportunities for villages to manage local potential through Village Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), which act as village economic entities aimed at improving community welfare. However, in various regions, BUMDes often face serious challenges such as weak governance, low managerial capacity, minimal innovation, and a lack of community participation in business management (Iskandar, 2020); (Mori Junior et al., 2019); (Ghofar et al., 2022); (Hadi et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, cooperatives, as a model for people's economic institutions, have basic principles to the spirit of village development, namely economic democracy, active member

participation, and an orientation toward shared prosperity (Faedlulloh, 2018); (Murwadi et al., 2017). A cooperative-based BUMDes governance model is relevant because cooperatives adhere to the basic principles of economic democracy, active member participation, and an orientation toward shared prosperity. This approach aligns with the values of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goals 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequality), and 17 (Partnerships to Achieve the Goals).

Wulandari & Wardani, (2024) stated that the challenges faced by Village Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) are not only limited to weak governance, managerial capacity, and community involvement, but also include limited human resource competency, inconsistent institutional support, minimal capital, and low innovation

flexibility in responding to market and technological dynamics. For example, the study Community Empowerment Utilizing Open Innovation as a Sustainable Village Owned Enterprise Strategy in Indonesia found that most BUMDes are in the initial or developing stages, with small contributions to village income and employment absorption; the main problems are limitations in human resource competency, narrow business scope, and lack of indepth operational knowledge. In addition, in the case of BUMDes in Kupang Regency, it was found that the low managerial and entrepreneurial capabilities of BUMDes administrators, the community's inability to engage in productive businesses, and the uncollectibility of community loans are inhibiting factors in achieving output and business goals. All of this confirms that for village development through BUMDes to be optimal and sustainable, comprehensive interventions are needed including increasing institutional and human resource capacity, improving capital and market access, and encouraging innovation that is adaptive to the local context and external changes such as technology and competition.

BUMDes are proven to encourage rural entrepreneurship with the dimensions of exploration and empowerment, capacity building and the support and involvement of all stakeholders (Tarlani et al., 2022). BUMDes were established in accordance with government policies based on the village discussion process as the culture of the Indonesian people by involving elements of the village government, associations and the community (Kania et al., 2021); (Hilmawan et al., 2023); (Satoto et al., 2024).

Efforts to improve the welfare of village communities, especially those who are members of BUMDes, are very necessary. Therefore, it is important to design a cooperative-based BUMDes governance model that not only strengthens village institutions and business capacity, but also encourages participatory, inclusive, and sustainable village development.

The cooperative principle of implementing a one member one vote system has the advantage of preventing elite domination in BUMDes decision making (Purnamawati, 2023), as each member has equal voting rights regardless of capital size. Furthermore, the concept of joint ownership, where members also become business owners, encourages their active participation in BUMDes management, unlike members who are merely passive beneficiaries. Finally, the equitable distribution of Operating Surplus (SHU) based on the level of member participation also plays a crucial role in increasing community motivation to become more involved in the business. Interviews with administrators and community leaders revealed that strategic decision-making in

BUMDes is still dominated by a handful of parties, without an inclusive village deliberation mechanism. Some business units even operate without a documented and mutually agreed-upon business plan (Lutfi, 2025).

The research questions are as follows: 1) What is the current state of village-owned enterprise (BUMDes) governance, particularly in terms of participation, transparency, and accountability? 2) How can cooperative principles be integrated into the BUMDes governance model? 3) How can a cooperative-based BUMDes governance model support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? 4) What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing a cooperative-based BUMDes governance model at the village level?

The purpose of this research is to design a transparent, participatory, and sustainable cooperative-based village-owned enterprise (BUMDes) governance system, while also encouraging the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) values into BUMDes operations. Furthermore, this model is expected to enhance BUMDes' institutional capacity for professional business management and serve as a strategic reference for village governments and other stakeholders in developing BUMDes oriented toward community empowerment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The success or failure of rural development is often determined by several key factors. These include the availability of adequate infrastructure such as transportation, the presence of supporting facilities, and the effectiveness of rural management strategies (Priatmoko et al., 2021); (Hartwig & Nguyen, 2023). Another critical aspect is the ability of rural actors to adapt to digital transformation. Studies have also highlighted the importance of technological adoption, such as the creation of smart BUMDes or similar rural enterprises, and the implementation of agricultural innovations that enhance farmers' productivity and welfare (Prabowo et al., 2021). In addition, locally generated knowledge, creative approaches, and social innovation driven by rural economic agents contribute significantly to development outcomes (Neumeier, 2017) further stress that innovation practices in infrastructure development must integrate social, financial, and production dimensions at the village level.

A cooperative is a business entity whose members are individuals or legal entities, whose activities are based on cooperative principles and are also a people's economic movement based on the principle of family, (Cooperatives Law No. 25 of 1992). Meanwhile, Article 33, paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution outlines that the Indonesian

economy is structured collectively and based on the principle of kinship. This is further emphasized in the Explanation to the 1945 Constitution, paragraph 1, which states that the appropriate business structure is a cooperative. Furthermore, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) decree states that cooperatives should be used as a primary vehicle for developing the business capabilities of economically disadvantaged groups. According to Dr. Mohammad Hatta, cooperatives are a joint effort to improve the economic well-being of people based on mutual assistance (Suastika, 2017).

Cooperative principles are the fundamental guidelines that inspire and underpin every activity and operation of cooperatives as economic organizations for individuals with limited economic resources. These principles function as the basis for achieving cooperative goals, namely fulfilling shared needs and promoting collective efforts to attain mutual prosperity. In addition, cooperative principles represent the distinctive characteristics of cooperatives, differentiating them from other economic organizations and business entities.

The implementation of cooperative principles in the governance of Village Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) is a crucial element in realizing democratic, accountable, and sustainable management. The six governance principles adopted in BUMDes transparency, accountability, cooperation, participation, emancipation, and sustainability have a significant positive impact on organizational performance, both financially and non-financially (Kurnianto & Iswanu, 2021). Sari et al., (2024) shows that the integration of these governance principles enables BUMDes to achieve not only economic performance, but also social, environmental, and cultural performance in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, in the context of cooperatives, research in Badung Regency confirms that Good Corporate Governance (GCG) principles such as transparency, fairness, independence, and accountability have a positive impact on cooperative financial performance (Saputra & Noviari, 2018). Thus, adapting cooperative principles into BUMDes including the principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic management, economic participation of members, and fair distribution of business profits is not only in accordance with the legal values of village laws and regulations (Village Law No. 6/2014) but is also supported by empirical evidence that these principles strengthen legitimacy, efficiency, and impact the welfare of village communities.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with exploratory descriptive methods combined with participatory and interdisciplinary strategies

(Judijanto et al., 2024). The primary objective of this research is to design a cooperative based Village Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) governance model that is adaptive, accountable, and supportive of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth description of the social dynamics, institutions, and local practices that are the primary focus of the research, while also enabling the active involvement of various stakeholders in the data collection and analysis process.

A field study was conducted at the Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), located in Mranggen District, Demak Regency. Data collection techniques in this phase included direct observation of ongoing governance practices at the BUMDes, in-depth interviews with BUMDes managers, village officials, and local community leaders, and analysis of administrative documentation such as organizational structures, financial reports, and standard operating procedures (SOPs). The objective of this phase was to obtain a realistic picture of the institutional conditions, the level of community participation, and the extent to which transparency and accountability have been implemented in BUMDes governance. Furthermore, the model was tested and evaluated. A limited pilot test was conducted at the Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti BUMDes as the pilot location. Evaluation of the model's implementation was conducted through direct observation, an effectiveness assessment by stakeholders, and participatory reflection supplemented by a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. The main objective of this phase was to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the designed model, identify challenges in its implementation, and identify opportunities for future model improvements.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Governance Conditions of the Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti Village Owned Enterprise

Observations and interviews indicate that the governance of the Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) still faces several challenges. In terms of community participation, the level of citizen involvement in village deliberations remains limited, with most strategic decisions determined by the core management and village officials. This creates a significant potential for elite capture (dominance by certain management), while community aspirations have not been fully accommodated.

In terms of transparency, although financial reports are prepared at the end of each year, not all reports are publicly available. Most

information remains limited to the management circle, creating the perception that management is not fully transparent. In terms of accountability, the management has attempted to prepare accountability reports, but they are not yet equipped with simple accounting standards or internal audits, making comprehensive oversight difficult. Wulandari & Wardani, (2024) revealed that most Village Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Indonesia still face similar weaknesses: limited managerial capacity, minimal institutional support, and low innovation flexibility in responding to market and technological changes.

Implementation of Cooperative Principles in Village Owned Enterprise Governance

The integration of cooperative principles in the Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti Village Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) remains partial. The principle of open and voluntary membership has not been explicitly implemented, as BUMDes membership tends to be village-based, rather than a formal membership structure like a cooperative. The "one member, one vote" principle is not yet optimal, as decision-making is still dominated by the core management.

However, the principle of shared ownership is beginning to emerge through community awareness that BUMDes assets belong to the village, although their utilization is uneven. The principle of equitable distribution of Operating Surplus (SHU) has not been consistently implemented, as the majority of business profits are used to cover operational costs and business unit development. Member education and training are still minimal, although some business management training has been conducted in collaboration with the local government.

These findings indicate that implementing cooperative principles can be a solution to strengthen BUMDes governance. Purnamawati, (2023) emphasized that the "one member, one vote" principle effectively prevents elite domination and ensures that every villager has an equal role in decision-making. Thus, the integration of cooperative principles can encourage active participation, a more equitable distribution of benefits, and enhance the community's sense of ownership in the BUMDes.

Contribution of Cooperative-Based Governance Model to Achieving SDGs

The results of the cooperative-based governance model trial demonstrate significant improvements in economic and social performance. In terms of economic performance, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) business units, such as grocery trading and village asset

management, became more adaptive to local community needs, leading to increased BUMDes revenue and greater employment opportunities. This outcome supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Meanwhile, social performance also improved as community participation increased through deliberative decision-making processes, while business benefits, including profits and social programs, were distributed more equitably among community members. These developments contribute to the achievement of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality).

In addition, the governance model strengthened institutional performance through the implementation of transparency, accountability, and shared ownership principles. As a result, public trust in BUMDes management increased significantly. The stronger institutional credibility also encouraged broader collaboration between the village and external stakeholders, including secondary cooperatives, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This aligns with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which emphasizes the importance of cooperation and partnerships in achieving sustainable development.

This supports international literature, such as Neumeier, (2017) and Prabowo et al., (2021), which emphasizes the importance of social innovation and local participation as key to the success of sustainable village development.

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementation (SWOT)

Although the cooperative-based governance model offers many advantages, its implementation at Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) still faces several challenges. One major challenge is the limited capacity of human resources, particularly in financial management, digital innovation, and entrepreneurship. In addition, access to capital remains constrained because the BUMDes encounters difficulties in obtaining loans from formal financial institutions due to weak financial reporting systems. Another obstacle is the relatively weak culture of participation, as some members of the community still perceive the BUMDes as belonging solely to the village government rather than as a collectively owned institution.

Despite these challenges, there are also significant opportunities for strengthening the cooperative-based governance model. Regulatory support through Village Law No. 6/2014 and regulations issued by the Ministry of Villages regarding BUMDes provide a strong legal foundation for institutional development. Furthermore, the potential for collaboration with

cooperatives, private institutions, and other stakeholders through a pentahelix collaboration scheme creates opportunities to improve organizational capacity and business expansion. Advances in digital technology also offer

considerable potential to expand market access, improve management efficiency, and enhance the overall performance and sustainability of the BUMDes.

Table. 1 Matrix SWOT (Model Testing and Evaluation)

Internal External	Opportunities (O) ▪ Local government support ▪ Potential partnerships with other cooperatives & local business actors ▪ Opportunities for collaboration-based village business innovation	Threats (T) ▪ Competition with the private sector ▪ Changes in market preferences ▪ Limited access to capital
Strengths (S) ▪ Increased community participation ▪ Openness of financial information ▪ New business ideas emerge	Strategy SO ▪ Leverage community participation to expand business partnerships. ▪ Use financial transparency to attract government/partner support. ▪ Develop new business ideas based on innovation and collaboration.	Strategy ST ▪ Increase public trust through accountability to face private sector competition. ▪ Develop flexible business ideas in line with market trends. ▪ Leverage community social capital to overcome capital constraints.
Weaknesses (W) ▪ Limited technical capabilities in modern financial management ▪ Weakness in digital marketing ▪ Dependence on core management	Strategy WO ▪ Conducting financial and digital marketing training with government/partner support. ▪ Connecting Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) with cooperative networks to expand markets. ▪ Developing SDG-based business plans for more systematic governance.	Strategy WT ▪ Establish a management cadre system to reduce dependency. ▪ Develop a community marketing strategy to compete with the private sector. ▪ Seek alternative funding sources (CSR, crowdfunding, cooperatives) to cover capital constraints.

Based on the table above, the SWOT analysis of BUMDes shows that in terms of Strengths, there is high community participation, openness in financial information, and the emergence of new business ideas, which serve as important social capital for village business development. However, there are still significant Weaknesses, such as limited capital, weak financial management, low digital literacy, and dependence on core management, which hinders regeneration.

In terms of Opportunities, BUMDes is supported by the local government, has potential partnerships with other cooperatives and local businesses, and has the opportunity to develop innovative village businesses based on collaboration. Meanwhile, Threats include competition with the private sector, rapidly changing market preferences, and limited access to business capital.

Through this combined analysis, a more comprehensive BUMDes development strategy can be developed. The SO strategy is directed at

leveraging community participation and financial transparency to forge partnerships and create business innovation. The ST strategy emphasizes increasing community trust and business diversification to compete with the private sector. Meanwhile, the WO strategy emphasizes increasing management capacity through training and collaboration with external parties. Finally, WT's strategy focuses on establishing a cadre system, digitalization, and seeking alternative funding sources to address capital constraints while reducing dependence on specific individuals.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that village owned enterprise (BUMDes) governance based on cooperative principles can enhance institutional legitimacy, strengthen accountability, and encourage community participation in village development. Integrating cooperative values has been shown to reduce the risk of elite domination, increase community

ownership, and expand the socio-economic impact of BUMDes.

Furthermore, strengthening cooperative-based governance aligns with the strategy for achieving the SDGs at the village level, particularly in the dimensions of poverty alleviation (SDG 1), economic growth (SDG 8), inequality reduction (SDG 10), and partnerships (SDG 17). Therefore, this model is not only relevant for improving the performance of BUMDes Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti but also has the potential to be replicated in other BUMDes with adaptations to local contexts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research demonstrates that the application of cooperative principles in the governance of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) significantly contributes to strengthening village economic institutions. Cooperative principles such as voluntary and open membership, democratic management, member economic participation, and education and training provide a foundation for creating transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance. The findings from BUMDes Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti show that the integration of cooperative values increases institutional legitimacy through stronger public trust in the management process. In addition, accountability is strengthened through a more transparent reporting system that can be monitored through participatory mechanisms involving the community.

The study also reveals that cooperative-based governance encourages broader community participation, where villagers are not merely objects of development but active subjects involved in decision-making processes. Democratic mechanisms in business management help reduce the risk of domination by village elites, ensuring that governance remains inclusive and representative. Furthermore, the implementation of cooperative principles generates significant socio-economic impacts, including increased employment opportunities, the strengthening of local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and greater contributions to village revenue and economic resilience.

Moreover, the integration of cooperative principles into BUMDes governance has proven to be aligned with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The governance model supports SDG 1 (No Poverty) by creating new economic opportunities for rural communities, and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through job creation and support for productive businesses. It also contributes to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by promoting a fairer distribution of benefits and preventing exclusivity within village economic

activities. In addition, the model strengthens SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by expanding collaboration networks among villages, cooperatives, government institutions, and external partners.

Thus, the cooperative governance model not only improves the performance of BUMDes Sinar Mandiri Batusari Sakti but also has the potential to be replicated in other BUMDes with adjustments to the social, cultural, and economic conditions of each village.

Recommendations for strengthening the cooperative-based BUMDes governance model include: First, village governments and BUMDes managers need to strengthen their organizational structures based on cooperative principles to ensure a more democratic and participatory decision-making process. Furthermore, BUMDes need to establish transparent and publicly accessible financial reporting mechanisms and develop clear governance standard operating procedures (SOPs) to serve as operational guidelines based on cooperative values. Second, local governments, through the Village and Community Empowerment Office (PMD), need to provide technical assistance and managerial training related to cooperative principles and the integration of sustainable development goals (SDGs) to BUMDes managers. Local governments also need to provide derivative regulations or village regulations that can foster synergy between cooperatives and BUMDes so that management can be more effective and focused. Third, village communities need to be more actively involved in village deliberation forums and the BUMDes decision-making process.

Community participation should not only stop at participating in business activities but also need to be realized through participatory oversight to maintain accountability in BUMDes management. Fourth, academics and researchers are advised to conduct further studies on the effectiveness of cooperative governance models in village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) in various regions. Further research can also be directed at developing SDGs-based evaluation instruments to comprehensively and sustainably assess BUMDes performance. Fifth, for external partners such as NGOs, the business community, and cooperatives, strategic collaborations should be established in the form of business partnerships, inclusive funding, and technology transfer. This collaboration is expected to expand the BUMDes business network while strengthening village economic competitiveness within a sustainable development framework.

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