

REALIZING COMMUNITY WELFARE THROUGH VILLAGE FUND ALLOCATION AND DIRECT CASH ASSISTANCE

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Abstract - *This research aims to investigate the allocation of village funds and direct cash assistance on the welfare of communities in several villages in Sidoarjo. A quantitative approach was employed in this study. A total of 100 respondents who received direct cash assistance were selected using purposive sampling method. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis with the assistance of the SPSS program. The findings of this research indicate a significant contribution from the allocation of village funds and direct cash assistance to the improvement of community welfare. This implies that both programs have a significant impact, both partially and simultaneously. Thus, the results of this study can provide a deeper understanding of the importance of managing village funds and providing direct cash assistance in enhancing community welfare at the village level, as well as offering a basis for more effective decision-making concerning resource allocation and development programs.*

Keywords: *allocation of village funds, direct cash assistance, community welfare.*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the problem of development in cities and villages has become a gap that has become increasingly worrying over time. This is because economic activity is more concentrated in urban areas, so the majority of the population chooses to live and work in urban areas. This condition resulted in a reduction in the workforce in the village. In general, most of Indonesia's rural areas have a higher number of poor people compared to urban areas (Diah, 2020). Therefore, this needs to be resolved by integrating the economy in villages and cities as a real effort to reduce poverty rates. In rural areas, so that economic growth can be encouraged, in 2014 there was the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. From this law, the Village obtains authority in terms of managing Village development and managing Village finances to be more independent and prosperous. In addition, the Government has attempted to initiate and implement various programs to support development at the local level for the prosperity of its communities (Dwiningsih et al., 2019). Community welfare is a social, material and spiritual procedure and livelihood that is covered by an increasing sense of safety, decency and inner and outer peace for every citizen to make efforts to fulfill physical, spiritual and social needs for themselves, their families and society (Aliyah et al., 2023). There are two programs that focus on how to improve the welfare of the community, namely through the allocation of Village funds and direct cash assistance. Both have similarities in terms of principles, namely empowering and providing assistance to the community directly so that various economic and social challenges in the village can be resolved (Darmawan, 2017).

Village fund allocation is the first factor that influences the welfare of the people in the village (Fathony et al., 2019). This program provides autonomy to Villages to manage and allocate funds directly according to local needs. The use of Village funds can vary, from building basic infrastructure such as roads, irrigation canals, to developing local economic sectors such as agriculture, livestock and small industry (Kusmana & Ismail, 2018; Darmawan et al., 2021). This Village fund allocation is also used to finance some Village government programs in carrying out Village empowerment and institutional activities, providing allowances for Village government officials and providing funds for rural infrastructure development (Wahyudi et al., 2023). To carry out this authority, the Village government has sources of revenue that are used to finance the activities it carries out. The use of Village fund allocations must also provide maximum benefits by prioritizing the main development and empowerment activities of Village communities that are urgent to be implemented, and are more needed and directly related to the interests of the majority of Village communities (Nasution, 2021). The allocation of Village funds is expected to increase equitable development and Village welfare through improving public services in the Village. In addition, by advancing the village economy, it is hoped that it can overcome development gaps between villages and strengthen village communities as subjects of development (Darmawan, 2016). Thus, Village funds are not just financial assistance, but are also an instrument for increasing Village capacity in resource management and sustainable development.

Apart from the allocation of Village funds, direct cash assistance is a real effort made by the Government to resolve poverty and make the community more prosperous (Djako et al., 2022). Each village is obliged to implement the regulations that have been established, one of which is the distribution of direct cash assistance. This assistance provides financial assistance to individuals or families who really need it and has the aim of ensuring their social and

economic security (Aseh et al., 2021). The benefits of direct cash assistance are not only felt by the recipients but provide opportunities for the purchasing power and consumption levels of local communities so that inclusive economic growth is more encouraged (Fisher et al., 2017). By paying attention to this, the government is required to distribute direct cash assistance funds on target and be sensitive to various issues of community needs as a social service effort (Wibawani et al., 2021). Data collection problems are actually the government's main weakness in obtaining valid data. Not a few people are also unsure about the criteria for poor families who can receive direct cash assistance and don't even know when the data collection process will take place. Apart from that, registration problems often occur, such as some communities not being registered and some communities even being registered more than once or multiple times. To implement the government program, namely direct cash assistance, of course requires adequate, accurate and reliable data so that the development of the information system can be well directed and on target (Nadeak, 2008). Resident data is collected for financial changes that will occur at any time during the implementation of direct cash assistance and the local community's way of life. Likewise, in line with the opinion of Fusaro (2021), the impact caused by the direct cash assistance policy cannot significantly influence the improvement in the welfare of the poor, considering that economic changes are constantly undergoing changes which also have an impact on people's living standards. This implies that aid recipients can utilize the assets for any reason. In reality, most beneficiaries use direct cash assistance assets to buy rice and lamp fuel, pay electricity costs and house contracts, and pay off obligations (Azhari & Suhartini, 2021). Apart from that, there are also several aid recipients who use these assets for welfare and school fees.

Although Village fund allocation and direct cash assistance have real potential for community welfare, there are often challenges that must be resolved. Usually what often happens is that Village funds and direct cash assistance are misused, unequal access and distribution, resilience and sustainability of the program. Thus, consistently carrying out system evaluations and improvements is the key to supporting the effectiveness and efficiency of these two programs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research aims to investigate the allocation of village funds and direct cash assistance towards the welfare of communities in several villages in Sidoarjo. A quantitative approach was employed in this study. A total of 100 respondents who received direct cash assistance were selected using purposive sampling method. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire encompassing demographic data and perceptions regarding village fund allocation (X.1), direct cash assistance (X.2), and community welfare (Y). These variables are also comprised of indicators.

a. The Village Fund Allocation Variable (X.1)

Village fund allocation refers to funds designated by the central government, received by the village government, with the objective of ensuring that development and advancement of the village can be carried out. The indicators include transparency, accountability, and participatory aspects (Nasution, 2021).

b. The Direct Cash Assistance Variable (X.2)

Direct cash assistance is a form of social aid provided to the village community in the form of cash, received by families entitled to it based on predefined criteria. The indicators include accuracy, transparency, inclusivity, adherence to procedures, supervision and control, community participation, and satisfaction (Nadeak, 2008).

c. The Community Welfare Variable (Y)

Community welfare denotes the condition of village residents being able to live safely, comfortably, and peacefully across all aspects of life, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. The indicators include social, economic, and democratic aspects (Soetomo, 2014).

Perceptions of the community's responses based on the variables village fund allocation (X.1), direct cash assistance (X.2), and community welfare (Y) were evaluated using a Likert Scale, with a value of 5 for Strongly Agree (SA) responses and a value of 1 for Strongly Disagree (SD) responses. Subsequently, data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis aided by the SPSS program. Validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing were conducted on the data processed through SPSS, including partial and simultaneous tests, with the results providing insights into the coefficient of determination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From several villages involving 100 respondents, there were variations in demographic characteristics as follows. The first is the gender of the village with different gender distribution of men and women. There were 58 female respondents and 42 male respondents. Second, consideration of the age of the respondents showed that the average age of pre-elderly was between 45-59 years with 69 respondents and the remaining 31 respondents were respondents aged 60 years. Third, marital status is divided into married, widow, widower which shows social diversity.

Married respondents received 35, widowed respondents received 40 respondents and the remaining 25 respondents were widowed. Fourth, there are around 53 respondents who are not working and the remaining 47 respondents are still working as traveling traders. Of the 100 respondents, all of them had received BLT. By identifying the demographic characteristics, it shows that all respondents have filled out the questionnaire according to the instructions. This is because the pre-elderly and elderly are accompanied by officers from the social service when filling out the questionnaire so that data collection can be carried out smoothly.

Evaluation of the validity of village fund allocation (X.1), direct cash assistance (X.2) and community welfare (Y) is carried out based on corrected item total correlation which is more than 0.30. This value is a reference that the question item is good and correctly measures the variable. In accordance with the previous statement, looking at the output in SPSS proves that all the question items presented in the questionnaire are valid because they exceed the value limit, namely 0.30. Furthermore, understanding data reliability requires appropriate measurements based on Cronbach's Alpha above 0.60. This is utilized by measuring the consistency of village fund allocation variables (X.1), direct cash assistance (X.2) and community welfare (Y). In this case, it will prove a measurement instrument whose results are reliable.

Table 1
Variable Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
The Village Fund Allocation Variable (X.1)	0.702	Reliable
The Direct Cash Assistance Variable (X.2)	0.711	Reliable
The Community Welfare Variable (Y)	0.733	Reliable

Source: Output SPSS

From Table 1, the reliability coefficient for the village fund allocation variable (X.1), namely 0.702, direct cash assistance (X.2), namely 0.711 and community welfare (Y), namely 0.733. These values conclude that the reliability scale is high enough so that the measurement instrument is consistent when used again and that means reliability has been met.

Guidelines from the Normal P-Plot graph can be used to test the normality of the data. The criteria are divided into two types, if around the diagonal line there are dots that circle and move in one direction, then the data distribution is normal and conversely the data distribution becomes abnormal if the points are away from the diagonal line and move randomly. Then, to detect autocorrelation test results, you can also use an assessment of the Durbin Watson results which are set from -2 to 2 to be free from autocorrelation problems.

Understanding the results of calculations to predict the community welfare variable (Y) through village fund allocation variables (X.1) and direct cash assistance (X.2) can be known from multiple linear regression analysis. Likewise, the output of partial test results is in Table 2 which uses a significance value of less than 0.05.

Table 2
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	44.866	5.930		7.567	.000
	X1	4.474	.868	.412	5.157	.000
	X2	3.543	.694	.408	5.106	.000

Source: SPSS Output

Table 2 presents the results that the regression model formed is $Y = 44,866 + 4,474 X.1 + 3,543 X.2 + e$. For the determination of the partial test results, it is stated that there is a significant contribution through the allocation of village funds (X.1) to community welfare (Y) and direct cash assistance (X.2) also provides similar results that can contribute significantly to community welfare (Y). The results have been adjusted to a significance value below 0.05, namely that each has a significance value for village fund allocation (X.1) of 0.000 and direct cash assistance (X.2) of 0.000. Followed by a simultaneous test which shows the suitability of the village fund allocation variables (X.1) and direct cash assistance (X.2) on community welfare (Y) whose significance must be less than 0.05. The results are in Table 3 below.

Table 3
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6981.340	2	3490.670	37.990	.000 ^b
	Residual	8912.770	97	91.884		
	Total	15894.110	99			

Source: SPSS Output

From Table 3 there is an F-count of 37,990 with a significance of 0.000. This means that the variables village fund allocation (X.1) and direct cash assistance (X.2) together contribute to community welfare (Y) because $0.000 < 0.05$.

Table 4
Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.663 ^a	.439	.428	9.58563	.663 ^a

Source: SPSS Output

From Table 4, there is an R value of 66.3%, so the relationship between the village fund allocation variables (X.1), direct cash assistance (X.2) and community welfare (Y) is quite strong. Around 43.9% of community welfare (Y) is explained by the variable's village fund allocation (X.1) and direct cash assistance (X.2). However, other variations still contribute 56.1% to the formation of community welfare (Y) which is not included in this study.

Real contributions with significant results can be made from the allocation of Village funds towards community welfare. It was found that there were several studies with the same results, namely from Fathony et al. (2019); Harahap (2021); Wasi et al. (2023). These results indicate that community welfare requires a crucial role from the allocation of Village funds. The more precise and transparent management of Village fund allocations contributes to all aspects of community life. Utilization of Village funds is realized in the form of infrastructure for building roads, bridges, irrigation and facilities as well as improving services thereby opening up economic opportunities. In fact, the distribution of goods and services is not only smoother, but connectivity from one region to another has also increased. Local economic development in the form of traditional markets, small industrial centers, provision of skills training has the potential to open up employment opportunities and at the same time increase people's income (Darmawan, 2019). Village funds allocated for education and health will improve community welfare because that way the community can be more helped and facilitated (Petchmark et al., 2011). Village funds allocated for entrepreneurship training to further empower the community and developed community facilities provide opportunities for local communities so that an active role in managing local resources can be realized (Mardikaningsih et al., 2023). Through this, the community is much more independent so that social relations and community cohesion are even stronger. Consistently managed resources can also be the focus of allocated Village funds so that the environment remains well maintained in terms of greening, water conservation, waste recycling towards a prosperous society (Tabor, 2002). For this reason, the accuracy and effectiveness of allocated Village funds significantly contributes to community welfare. Thus, Village management needs to consistently invite its residents to be involved in allocated Village funds so that the aspirations and needs of the community can be heard (Khasanah et al., 2010). The plan that has been agreed upon with the residents will facilitate the proportion of Village fund allocation based on community needs and priorities. However, transparency and accountability during the procurement process and its implementation must be monitored regularly and carefully. Village residents must be motivated to participate in monitoring the progress of their projects so that there is a sense of responsibility for the development of their Village. Ultimately, this is the key to increased societal well-being and strong sustainable development.

Real contributions with significant results can be made from Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) to community welfare. It was found that there were several studies with the same results, namely from Djako et al. (2022); Widyawati et al. (2022); Maspawati et al. (2023). These results indicate that the government's policy in the form of direct cash assistance becomes financial assistance that is directly received by those entitled to it so that its impact on improving people's welfare is significant. Through BLT, poverty rates can be reduced because their basic needs can be met and social gaps are reduced (Cyrek, 2019; Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Likewise, economic activities at the local level such as MSMEs are more helped because people's purchasing power becomes higher due to the ability of BLT recipients to purchase goods or services (Darmawan et al., 2023). BLT recipients are also more likely to improve their quality of life and health because they are able to pay and access what they need. Seeing the significant benefits of BLT, continuity of supervision over its implementation must be realized so that existing funds are not misused and the long-term BLT distribution program becomes more effective (Ungerson, 1997). Thus, it is important for interested parties to carry out an analysis of the population profile, poverty level, obstacles faced by vulnerable communities so that the delivery of BLT is right on target and becomes more effective. Internal audits must be carried out and reviewed consistently so that the regulations and responsibilities for distributing BLT funds are in accordance. People who receive BLT must be educated so that the funds they receive are allocated according to their needs, not their desires, for example giving priority to purchasing basic daily necessities. Existing programs must be actively communicated so that feedback and problems that arise can be identified and the necessary complaints, suggestions and guidance can be provided. Then data analysis, measurement of performance indicators, program compliance must be examined further so that future programs can be improved and the desired community goals can be achieved effectively. Through this effectiveness, the BLT program becomes a powerful tool so that people's welfare increases and even poverty rates are reduced.

CONCLUSIONS

This study produced research findings that there is a real contribution made by the allocation of village funds and direct cash transfers to the improvement of community welfare in the village. This means that the potential of these two programs has a significant impact both partially and simultaneously. Increased community welfare can be seen from the quality of life of the community which also increases, adequate housing and the environment so that opportunities for a better life can be realized. This all provides opportunities for the community to play an active role in village development. These two factors are important steps towards sustainable development that can accommodate all communities.

The government and social services play an important role in improving community welfare so that in the future it is hoped that village funds will be allocated to provide skills training for local communities so that their economic conditions will be even better. Apart from that, the regulations that have been mandated by the central government can be implemented by the village government as best as possible so that the distribution of direct cash assistance can be achieved according to its function so that economic problems in the community can be resolved. Economic empowerment is the focus through the allocation of village funds which is realized by establishing cooperatives or MSMEs so that the community's income is not only better but job creation is more likely to occur. Women and children groups must be empowered through economic, social and educational aspects that are programmed in an inclusive manner. Community participation must be increased based on planning, implementation and evaluation. Increasing transparency and accountability of managed village funds and providing direct cash assistance must be realized. In the end, the availability of clearer information and complaints procedures that make access easier for the public through the government and social services really have a positive impact on a prosperous society. Future researchers should be able to explore this research by involving variables that of course have not been involved.

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