

Institutional Management Of Farmer Groups Using A Local Wisdom Approach In Bulukumba Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in agricultural practices among farmers' collectives in Kabupaten Bulukumba. The primary focus is to examine the obstacles, prospects, and consequences associated with the adoption of this methodology. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of integrating indigenous knowledge on institutional management and agricultural practices. The study utilizes a qualitative methodology, employing in-depth interviews with leaders of farmers' groups, members of these groups, and agricultural experts. The findings indicate that indigenous knowledge plays a crucial role in advancing environmentally-friendly agricultural methods, safeguarding cultural traditions, and facilitating community empowerment. Nevertheless, there are several challenges that arise in relation to adaptation, access to technology, and formal governance. The research findings propose policy recommendations aimed at facilitating the incorporation of local knowledge, highlighting the importance of community engagement, and emphasizing the potential of sustainable agricultural methods. This study is in line with prior research concerning the advantages of incorporating local wisdom in agriculture. It emphasizes the practical benefits of adopting traditional knowledge within the particular setting of Kabupaten Bulukumba.

Keywords: Institutional Management, Farmer Groups, Local Wisdom.

INTRODUCTION

Kabupaten Bulukumba, a regency situated in the South Sulawesi province of Indonesia, possesses a bountiful and varied agricultural terrain that holds significant importance in the economic and social structure of the region. The regency is widely recognized for its agricultural importance due to its fertile lands and favorable tropical climate, thus playing a significant role in contributing to Indonesia's agricultural sector (Mariyono, 2019). This introduction offers a comprehensive overview of the agricultural significance of the region, emphasizing the diverse range of crops, the agro-ecological conditions, and the pivotal role of farmers' groups in advocating for sustainable agricultural practices.

The agricultural sector in Kabupaten Bulukumba exhibits a notable assortment of crops and products. The fertile soils and tropical climate of the region create an optimal environment for the cultivation of a diverse range of agricultural commodities. The primary agricultural produce cultivated in the region encompasses rice, maize, cassava, cloves, nutmeg, and cacao. Moreover, coconut plantations are widely present, making a substantial contribution to the manufacturing of coconut-derived commodities such as coconut oil and copra (Abeysekara & Waidyarathne, 2020). The agricultural production in the region holds great importance not only for local consumption but also plays a significant role in the larger Indonesian agricultural sector. Consequently, it serves as a crucial component of the nation's economic framework (Koochafkan & Altieri, 2011).

The farmers residing in Kabupaten Bulukumba play a pivotal role in sustaining the flourishing agricultural sector of the region. A significant proportion of the populace residing in the regency is actively involved in agricultural pursuits, with farming continuing to hold a prominent position within the local cultural fabric. In order to effectively administer their agricultural operations and optimize output, farmers frequently establish collective entities known as farmers' groups or cooperatives. These groups play a pivotal role in facilitating and coordinating diverse facets of agricultural endeavors, encompassing resource allocation, knowledge dissemination, marketing, and collective decision-making.

The significance of farmers' groups in Kabupaten Bulukumba cannot be overemphasized. These groups function as a central core

for fostering collaboration among local farmers, enabling collective efforts that are crucial for addressing shared challenges and capitalizing on potential opportunities. As stated by Stockbridge et al. (2003), the formation of farmers' groups facilitates the consolidation of resources, the exchange of optimal methodologies, and the joint utilization of government programs or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for support. Moreover, they augment the negotiating leverage of individual farmers within markets, resulting in improved remuneration for their agricultural commodities. These organizations play a crucial role in mitigating the susceptibility of small-scale farmers, who frequently encounter challenges associated with climate change, market volatility, and limited resources.

In recent times, Kabupaten Bulukumba, similar to numerous other agricultural regions across the globe, has encountered a variety of challenges that pose a threat to the long-term viability of its agricultural practices. According to the study conducted by Thomas et al. (2007), climate change has resulted in unpredictable patterns of rainfall, which have had a significant impact on crop production and have created a sense of uncertainty among farmers in the local community. The issue of soil degradation and the unsustainable utilization of natural resources has elicited apprehension regarding the enduring sustainability of agriculture in the region. In light of these challenges, there is an increasing acknowledgement of the necessity for improved institutional management within farmers' groups in order to bolster the resilience of the local agricultural sector.

In the present context, there has been considerable focus on the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into agricultural practices within the region of Kabupaten Bulukumba. The concept of local wisdom, which is frequently ingrained within the cultural and historical framework of a particular region, provides a distinctive viewpoint on sustainable and regionally tailored agricultural methodologies. Utilizing this knowledge has the potential to enhance agricultural management and make a valuable contribution to the conservation of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage.

The agricultural significance of Kabupaten Bulukumba is intricately connected to the livelihoods of its inhabitants and the wider agricultural landscape of Indonesia. The significance of agriculture

in the local economy and social fabric is underscored by the diverse range of agricultural products in the region, as well as the crucial involvement of farmers' groups. However, the challenges posed by climate change and unsustainable practices necessitate innovative solutions, including the incorporation of local wisdom into agricultural management (Leach & Mearns, 1996). The objective of this study is to investigate these dynamics, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the advancement of environmentally friendly and region-specific farming methods in Kabupaten Bulukumba. Additionally, this research has the potential to serve as a blueprint for other agricultural areas encountering comparable difficulties.

Given the ever-changing agricultural challenges and the imperative for sustainable and locally tailored farming methods in Kabupaten Bulukumba, the integration of indigenous knowledge emerges as a promising and groundbreaking strategy that offers numerous advantages. The concept of local wisdom is intrinsically connected to the cultural and historical background of a particular region. It serves as a valuable source of indigenous knowledge, practices, and insights that have been transmitted across generations (Maspul & Almalki, 2023). This introduction examines the significant benefits of adopting local wisdom in agricultural management, with a particular focus on its ability to effectively tackle pressing issues, promote resilience, and enhance the overall welfare of the local community.

The local knowledge, which is deeply embedded in the culture of Kabupaten Bulukumba, not only provides a means to achieve sustainable agricultural practices but also strengthens the ability of crops to withstand unpredictable climate patterns and extreme weather events. The conventional agricultural methods, which have been transmitted across successive generations, demonstrate a remarkable alignment with the surrounding ecosystem, thereby enhancing the efficiency of resource utilization and mitigating environmental deterioration. As agricultural practitioners embrace these traditional practices, they effectively alleviate the detrimental effects of unsustainable techniques, thereby promoting agricultural sustainability and guaranteeing the ongoing provision of food, even under unfavorable circumstances.

Furthermore, local wisdom places significant importance on the conservation of biodiversity, encompassing various practices aimed at preserving indigenous plant and animal species (Rangpan,

2021). Through the deliberate cultivation of a wide range of crop varieties and the steadfast adherence to traditional agricultural practices, farmers make valuable contributions to the maintenance of ecological equilibrium, while simultaneously guaranteeing a diverse and nourishing food supply. The presence of diverse agricultural systems serves to mitigate the potential for crop failure resulting from pest infestations or disease outbreaks, thereby bolstering the resilience of local farming communities.

The act of embracing local wisdom serves to empower these communities. It facilitates an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of knowledge and collaboration, cultivating a collective sense of responsibility towards agricultural practices and resources. The adoption of a community-driven approach fosters an environment that promotes active engagement and decision-making among farmers' groups, thereby leading to the development of agricultural systems that are characterized by inclusivity, equity, and sustainability. Communities that hold a deep appreciation for their traditional knowledge are inclined to collaborate in safeguarding their cultural heritage and the environment. This collective effort fosters a sense of continuity and belonging, which are crucial for the preservation of their culture.

The integration of indigenous knowledge is not exclusively focused on improving agricultural techniques; it also serves as a crucial factor in safeguarding cultural identity and heritage. Indigenous practices exhibit a profound interconnection with the local culture, encompassing rituals and traditional beliefs. Through the adoption of these agricultural practices, Kabupaten Bulukumba guarantees the safeguarding of its cultural heritage, thereby facilitating its transmission to succeeding generations. This phenomenon enhances the connection between the community and their land, cultivating a profound sense of continuity and belonging that plays a pivotal role in upholding cultural resilience.

The utilization of indigenous knowledge in the field of agriculture has the potential to contribute to economic sustainability through the reduction of production expenses and dependence on external resources. This, in turn, can lead to enhanced profitability in farming operations (Sarkar et al., 2020). The implementation of sustainable farming practices has the potential to enhance the livelihoods of local farmers. Additionally, the endorsement of local

and traditional products can generate niche markets and facilitate opportunities for value addition.

The incorporation of indigenous knowledge into agricultural practices in Kabupaten Bulukumba presents a multitude of interrelated advantages, encompassing aspects such as sustainability, crop adaptability, preservation of biodiversity, empowerment of local communities, safeguarding of cultural heritage, and economic viability. By incorporating and valuing the extensive indigenous knowledge available, farmers in the region can effectively address the complexities of contemporary agriculture while simultaneously prospering in symbiosis with their surroundings and cultural legacy. The objective of this research is to investigate the ways in which these advantages can be utilized to improve the administrative management of farmers' groups and facilitate the advancement of a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector in Kabupaten Bulukumba. The findings of this study will provide valuable knowledge for agricultural development not only within the local region but also in other areas.

The objective of this study is to investigate the management of farmers' groups in Kabupaten Bulukumba, with a specific focus on the integration of local knowledge to improve agricultural practices and ensure the long-term viability of these institutions. Through an examination of the present condition of institutional management, an identification of the role played by local wisdom, and an assessment of the challenges and opportunities for integration, this study aims to elucidate the potential advantages of embracing traditional knowledge and practices in the pursuit of a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector in Kabupaten Bulukumba.

METHODS

The study utilized a qualitative research design, which is particularly suitable for investigating the intricate and subtle elements of agricultural management in farmers' groups within Kabupaten Bulukumba. The past tense is employed to delineate the research design that has already been implemented. This qualitative study employed data collection methods that encompassed in-depth interviews. The aforementioned methods were carefully chosen in order to obtain a thorough understanding of the present condition of institutional management within

farmers' groups, as well as the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in agricultural practices. The process of selecting farmers' groups in Kabupaten Bulukumba was conducted through purposive sampling in order to ensure a diverse representation in terms of group size, geographical location, and agricultural practices. The study involved individuals who held leadership positions within their respective groups, as well as members and experts in the field of agriculture. These individuals were selected to participate in comprehensive interviews. The conducted interviews explored the participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices pertaining to institutional management and the application of local knowledge in the field of agriculture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current State of Institutional Management

The findings derived from comprehensive interviews provide valuable insights into the present condition of institutional management within farmers' groups in Kabupaten Bulukumba. The aforementioned findings shed light on the difficulties associated with decision-making frameworks, documentation practices, educational initiatives, financial administration, and the disparity between stated objectives and actual execution. Furthermore, these groups place significant emphasis on the significance of proficient leadership, transparent governance, and active member engagement as pivotal components for achieving successful institutional management.

"In our group, decision-making is often centralized. I make most of the decisions regarding resource allocation and planning. Members follow my guidance."

"Record-keeping is a significant challenge for us. We have limited access to technology, and maintaining paper records can be overwhelming. As a result, our financial transparency is lacking."

The farmers' group employs a centralized decision-making structure, wherein the leader assumes a prominent position. The findings indicate that the process of decision-making may lack a significant level of participation, which has the potential to impede the active involvement of members. The difficulties associated with maintaining records within the group. The absence of adequate technological resources and the onerous task of managing physical

records can impede the achievement of financial transparency, thereby highlighting an area that holds promise for enhancement. In the interim, a member of the farmers' group expressed that:

"We receive occasional training sessions, but it's often difficult to apply what we learn to our actual farming practices. The training content doesn't always match our specific needs."

"Our group has a savings fund, but there's limited clarity on how it's managed. We don't have a formal financial committee, and this has caused some disputes and misunderstandings."

This interview exemplifies a prevalent issue encountered in numerous agricultural associations - the disparity between the instructional material and the pragmatic requirements of the members. The implication arises that training programs may lack effective customization to suit the particular circumstances of the group. The farmers' group exhibits a deficiency in transparency and a lack of formalized financial management. The lack of a financial committee has resulted in conflicts and misinterpretations, underscoring the necessity for enhanced financial governance.

Integration of Local Wisdom

The findings derived from comprehensive interviews offer valuable insights into the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in agricultural practices among farmers' collectives in Kabupaten Bulukumba. The aforementioned findings underscore the incorporation of conventional methodologies in the domains of planting techniques, weather forecasting, crop assortment, and conservation of biodiversity. Furthermore, they place significant emphasis on the societal and ecological advantages that arise from the incorporation of indigenous knowledge. These advantages encompass the development of a more cohesive community and the implementation of sustainable strategies for pest and disease control. The leader of the farmer group provided an illustration that:

"We've started incorporating local wisdom into our farming practices. For example, we now follow the traditional planting calendar, which our elders have always used. It helps us time our planting for optimal conditions."

"Our farmers' group conducts workshops where elders share their knowledge with the younger members. This not only preserves our cultural heritage but also imparts valuable agricultural insights."

The interviewee underscores the proactive effort to transfer local wisdom from elders to younger members. The workshops serve dual purposes – preserving cultural heritage and providing valuable agricultural insights that can enhance farming practices. The integration of local wisdom into the farmers' group's practices. By adopting the traditional planting calendar, the group aligns its activities with indigenous knowledge, aiming to optimize crop yields by planting at the right time. Although, Farmers' Group Member) said that:

"We've learned to read the natural signs, like bird behavior and cloud patterns, to predict the weather. This helps us make informed decisions about planting and harvesting."

"We've revived some traditional crop varieties that were well-suited to our local conditions but had fallen out of use. It's a part of our effort to preserve local biodiversity."

The pragmatic incorporation of indigenous knowledge in meteorological forecasting. Through the interpretation of natural indicators, farmers are able to make well-informed judgments regarding the optimal timing of agricultural activities. This practice significantly enhances their ability to adapt to the unpredictable and fluctuating climate conditions. The interviewee emphasizes an instance of incorporating indigenous knowledge into the process of crop selection, thereby revitalizing traditional varieties. This not only corresponds with indigenous knowledge but also aids in the conservation of local biodiversity, thereby promoting sustainable agriculture. The Agricultural Expert provided a demonstration that:

"I've observed that farmers' groups incorporating local wisdom tend to exhibit a stronger sense of community. This sense of belonging and shared heritage motivates them to work together and support one another."

The expert points out a social aspect of integrating local wisdom – the strengthening of community ties. By embracing their shared heritage and traditional practices, farmers' groups are more likely to work together and provide mutual support, enhancing their collective resilience. The incorporation of indigenous knowledge

into agricultural practices within farmers' collectives in Kabupaten Bulukumba entails a range of challenges and prospects. It is of utmost importance to comprehend these dynamics in order to efficiently leverage the potential advantages of indigenous knowledge.

The study conducted by Johnson et al. (2019) in Southeast Asia shed light on the significance of indigenous knowledge in fostering sustainable agricultural practices. The present investigation conducted in Kabupaten Bulukumba is in accordance with this discovery, as it demonstrates the significance of indigenous knowledge in promoting sustainability within agricultural collectives. Both studies underscore the significance of safeguarding indigenous knowledge in order to effectively respond to evolving environmental circumstances, enhance crop resilience, and mitigate the ecological repercussions of agricultural practices. The incorporation of conventional practices yields advantages for local communities and the environment, in accordance with the conclusions drawn from various research endeavors. The research conducted by Kim et al. (2018) focused on the examination of sustainable farming practices and their significance in cultural preservation within a rural Indonesian community. The study placed particular emphasis on the utilization of local wisdom in these farming methods. The present study conducted in Kabupaten Bulukumba corroborates these findings, demonstrating the significance of incorporating indigenous knowledge within farmers' collectives. This approach not only promotes sustainable agricultural practices but also safeguards cultural heritage. Both studies emphasize the importance of preserving cultural identity and promoting environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient agricultural methods.

The study conducted by Rahayu (2020) centered on the integration of local wisdom into agricultural cooperatives in Indonesia, with a particular emphasis on the challenges and opportunities associated with this process. The present study is consistent with these findings as it emphasizes the difficulties and potential benefits associated with the incorporation of indigenous knowledge within agricultural collectives in Kabupaten Bulukumba. The study acknowledges the difficulties associated with integrating traditional knowledge into contemporary methodologies and establishing formal governance structures. However, it also highlights the potential benefits of enhanced community

cooperation, sustainability, and transparency that can be achieved through the successful integration of local wisdom. Both studies propose the implementation of customized strategies to effectively tackle these challenges and leverage the advantages of indigenous knowledge.

The ongoing research conducted in Kabupaten Bulukumba is consistent with previous studies as it underscores the advantages of incorporating indigenous knowledge into agricultural practices. These advantages encompass sustainability, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the adoption of environmentally friendly methods. These studies collectively emphasize the significance of safeguarding and implementing traditional knowledge, customized to address the specific requirements and obstacles faced by each community, in order to attain agricultural systems that are more resilient and sustainable.

This study highlights the diverse benefits of incorporating indigenous knowledge into agricultural practices among farmer collectives in Kabupaten Bulukumba. The utilization of this approach not only serves as a mechanism for augmenting sustainable agricultural practices, safeguarding cultural heritage, and empowering communities, but also presents a valuable opportunity for effectively addressing the prevailing challenges. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers and local communities on how to effectively utilize local knowledge in order to promote a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector in Kabupaten Bulukumba.

CONCLUSION

The significance of adopting indigenous knowledge to tackle the intricate issues encountered by agricultural communities. By incorporating traditional knowledge, local communities have the potential to attain agricultural systems that are more sustainable, resilient, and culturally diverse. This would effectively safeguard the well-being of both current and future generations. This study represents a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse on the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in the field of agriculture and its capacity to bring about beneficial transformations within agricultural collectives and rural societies.

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