

**ANALYSIS OF FARMING GROUP MEMBER PARTICIPATION ON
THE DEVELOPMENT FARMING IN WONOSOCO VILLAGE
UNDAAN DISTRICT
(Case Study of Waduk Rejo Farmers Group)**



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ABSTRACT

The farmer group's success is determined by the management's ability to manage the group and the group member's participation level. The group member's participation in activities organized by farmer groups should start from three stages. There are the planning stage, the implementation stage, and the monitoring stage. This research aimed to determine the group member's participation level in the Waduk Rejo farmer groups. This research was carried out in October 2022 in Wonosoco Village, Undaan District, Kudus Regency. Researchers used a quantitative descriptive research method with primary data types obtained through direct interview techniques with administrators and members of farmer groups. The sampling method was determined using the stratified proportional random sampling method, which consisted of 30 respondents, management, and members of the Waduk Rejo farmer groups. The variables studied were participation variables in the three stages: planning, implementation, and supervision. This study uses a Likert scale as a method of analysis. The findings show that the level of participation of farmer group members is manifested from the activity planning stage, which includes participation in routine farmer group meeting activities, participation in providing advice and input to farmer groups, and participation in preparing work plans of farmer groups which are included in the active category. The implementation phase, which provides for the participation of farmer group activities in the form of irrigation improvements, agricultural infrastructure improvements, and pest control, is included in the active category. The supervision phase, which provides for the supervision of irrigation repair activities, agricultural infrastructure improvement, and pest control, is included in the dynamic type. This research shows that the members of the farmer group have high awareness and concern to develop and advance their farmer group together.

Keywords: farmer groups; farming; participation.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing the income and welfare of the community, especially farmers is a goal of national development through development initiatives in the agricultural sector. This initiative is closely related to the characteristics possessed by Indonesia as an agrarian country where most of the population work as farmers (Suratiah, 2015). Future efforts to reduce economic disparities, expand employment opportunities, and empower communities to take advantage of economic opportunities will most likely be obtained from agricultural development. Through agricultural extension activities, it is hoped that Indonesia will have qualified and trusted farmer resources, especially those who can be independent and professional, have an *entrepreneurial spirit*, are dedicated, have a strong work ethic, are disciplined, have high morals, and have a global outlook (Yuwono et al., 2016).



Awareness of farmers to develop their agricultural business is one of the essential elements that can contribute to agricultural development. Farmers join a forum for farmer groups to exchange information with each other. The goal of group dynamics is the achievement of group goals through the actions or participation of all members. It is hoped that these group activities will provide an opportunity for each member of the farmer group to contribute and participate in the activity agenda carried out by the farmer group (Hermanto & Swastika, 2011).

Each member of the farmer group will integrate, collaborate, and work together to achieve group goals. The objectives of the development program, especially in agricultural development, can only be realized and implemented with the cooperation and participation of all members. The existence of a farmer group assessment is a form of coaching designed to motivate farmers to work harder to obtain better results. Participation/participation of members in every activity carried out by farmer groups is one of the indicators for assessing farmer groups. According to Khusna et al., (2019), agricultural institutions empower farmer groups to improve farmer welfare.

Farmer groups can function optimally if their members participate actively. Member contributions to activity can occur due to social interaction with the community. Empowerment of farmer groups depends on farmer participation's role in improving the production quality to grow farmer groups. Participation shows the involvement and participation of farmers in the empowerment process, starting from the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the implemented empowerment program. To assess the level of community participation, measure the level of individual participation or individual involvement in group activities using the scale proposed by Yulianty (2005), namely membership in group organizations: attendance at each group meeting, as well as the participation and position of members in the management.

Based on the involvement of farmers in the group, it can be classified into stages which are used as variables so that the level of participation of farmer group members in managing and developing farming business can be measured, namely (1) the planning stage is the stage where farmer group members participate in planning business activities farmer. An activity or program includes the level of attendance in group meetings, the level of activity in conveying suggestions and opinions, and participation in the discussion and decision-making stages. (2) the stage of implementation is the stage of community participation in various activities as members of the activity (3) The stage of enjoying the results is when group members as subjects of growth are aware of the benefits of the program that has been implemented, and (4) the evaluation stage is when group members offer feedback to improve future program implementation. According to research by Hadi et al., (2019), the level of farmer perception has a significant influence on participation. The higher the members' perceptions and beliefs, the greater the farmer group's involvement in program implementation. The researcher's study is unique compared to other studies with the various activities carried out at each stage, starting from the planning, implementation, monitoring, and organizational dynamics of the Rejo Reservoir farmer groups. Each stage has various activities, including implementing rat pest control using the *gobyog* rat method using a rat trap tool.

Observing community participation can be a benchmark in seeing the original form of awareness and its contribution to the interests of village development, which aims to increase community welfare. The existence of the Rejo Rejo Reservoir farmer group in Wonosoco Village, Undaan District, Kudus Regency is the background for researchers looking for research on the participation of Waduk Rejo's farmer group in Wonosoco Village, Undaan District, Kudus Regency to support the acceleration of agricultural development in Wonosoco Village to achieve efforts to improve welfare. Farmer group members.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was conducted on October 2022 in Wonosoco Village, Undaan District, Kudus Regency. The researchers used two types of data in this study: primary and secondary data. Preliminary data is information obtained directly from the source and provided to data collectors or researchers. In contrast, secondary data is information that already exists and is analyzed by researchers to complement research data needs (Sugiyono, 2009). Primary data was obtained by conducting surveys and direct interviews with respondents. The selected respondents consisted of administrators and members of the Waduk Rejo farmer groups, number of which was 30 respondents. The data taken is in the form of perceptions/responses of the farmer group to the variable participation of farmer group members. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire developed from the participation variable. In collecting data, the author was assisted by local agricultural extension workers who had previously been given sufficient technical guidance. Respondents consisted of a population of farmers who were members of farmer groups, with a sampling technique

using *stratified proportional random sampling* (Etikan, 2017). The research data will be assessed by descriptive analysis in tabular form.

The primary method in this research is the descriptive-analytical method with the analytic survey technique, namely the problem-solving approach. After that, the current data is collected, collated, analyzed, and concluded. The data that has been obtained will be analyzed using a Likert Scale. The Likert scale is used to analyze the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of a person or group based on social phenomena around them; each response is associated with a statement or attitude support (Budiaji, 2013).

Table 1. Scale likert

| Symbol | Information | Score |
|--------|-------------|-------|
| A | Active | 3 |
| EA | Enough Akif | 2 |
| NA | Not Active | 1 |

After the question is answered, a trend of the respondent's response will be obtained based on the respondent's answer. Then by calculating the score for each question: The total score for each criterion includes the planning stage, implementation stage, and monitoring stage reduced by the questionnaires, multiplied by the number of respondents, and multiplied by the highest score. In this questionnaire, the number of respondents' answers starts from 1 to 3. The resulting Index Number will start from 90 for the lowest score and up to 270 for the highest score. Then the score will be interpreted. Interpretation of values is classified into 3: inactive with a score range of 0 to 90, moderately active with a value range of 91 to 180, and involved with a score range of 181 to 270.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of respondents were used as a standard to determine the ability of farmers to farm. The characteristics that will be observed are age, education level, length of time farming, and length of time being a member of a farmer group. Table 2 shows the characteristics of the respondent members of the Rejo Reservoir farmer group.

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents

| Respondent Characteristics | Amount | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Age | | |
| 26-35 | 3 | 10.0 |
| 36-45 | 4 | 13.3 |
| 46-55 | 10 | 33.3 |
| 56-65 | 11 | 36.7 |
| 66-75 | 1 | 3.3 |
| 76-85 | 1 | 3.3 |
| Education | | |
| Elementary School | 17 | 56.7 |
| Junior High School | 11 | 36.7 |
| High School | 2 | 6.7 |
| Old Business Farming | | |
| <10 | 2 | 6.7 |
| 11-20 | 3 | 10.0 |
| 21-30 | 12 | 40.0 |
| 31-40 | 10 | 33.3 |
| >40 | 3 | 10.0 |
| Long Became a Farmer's Group | | |
| <10 | 7 | 23.3 |
| 11-20 | 15 | 50.0 |
| >21 | 8 | 26.7 |

Table 2 shows that the majority of members of the farmer group, namely 56.7%, are still of productive age. According to Cepriadi & Yulida (2012), the productive period of humans is between the ages of 15 to 54 years. The generation has a significant physical and mental impact on work

tasks. Farmers of productive age will have better skills in conducting farming activities and being more dynamic in making decisions related to farming and meeting household needs. Farmers of effective age have a more extraordinary physical ability to work than those not. In addition, productive-age farmers usually accept new things more quickly, enabling them to think more creatively and innovatively (Indrayani & Andri, 2018).

The respondent's formal education level ranged from elementary to junior high school to senior high school. Respondents with elementary education were 17 people (56.67%), 11 junior high school students (36.67%), and 2 high school students (6.67%). The education level of farmers is low because most of the respondents only have education at the elementary level. This is consistent with Soekartawi's (2002) belief that education generally influences the thinking of farmers. Education as a process of transferring knowledge can not only be obtained through formal education. Still, it can also be obtained through non-formal education, such as training activities. Farmers with proper education can better deal with dynamic changes in agriculture. The level of education can also have an impact on the quality of human resources. In general, the higher the level of education, the more advanced the mindset will be so that they can play an active role and be involved in all planned farmer group activities.

The respondents' experience in farming varies widely. Still, the majority have been farming in the range of 21-30 years, namely 12 people or (40%), 31-40 years with 10 respondents or (33.33%), 11-20 years with 3 respondents or equal to (10%), >40 years as many as 3 respondents or 10%, and 10 years as many as 2 respondents or 6.67%. This shows that the more extended the farming experience of the farmer group's members, the better their understanding of cultivation. Farmers acquire farming skills by participating in farmer groups and extension activities by relevant agencies. According to Manyamsari & Mujiburrahmad (2014), Farmers who have been farming for a long time have broader experience and skills in their farming activities. Farmers who have been farming for a long time will be able to adopt and implement innovations and be more selective and careful in the decision-making process of their farming activities. Conversely, farmers with low experience tend to make choices quickly and commit to more risks (Agatha & Wulandari, 2018).

The length of time a farmer member the respondents was also quite varied. The majority of respondents had experience being a farmer group member of 11-20 years, as many as 15 people or as much as (50%), experience as a member of a farmer group of 21-30 years, as many as 8 people or as much as (26.67 %) and experience of being farmer group's member <10 years as many as 7 people or (23.33%). This shows that the longer the farmer's experience as a member of a farmer group, the more likely they will understand the dynamics within the farmer group so that they will be more thorough and careful in making a group decision. Generally, farmers with more experience as members of farmer groups will be appointed administrators because they have more experience and can lead farmer groups. According to Prasetya *et al.*, (2015), the length of time being a member of a farmer group indicates a farmer's ability to carry out his farming business. With most farmer group members having experience as group members in the range of 11-20 years, it shows that the farming experience possessed by farmer group members is already in the high category, so it is hoped that group members can maximize their farming business well.

Participation of Farmer Group Members

Planning Stage

The planning stage is essential before carrying out farming activities. This planning stage will usually be carried out during regular farmer group meetings. At this planning stage, there are 3 indicators: participation in attending regular farmer group meetings, providing advice and input to farmer groups, and preparing farmer group work plans. Table 3 shows the level of involvement of farmer group members at the planning stage.

Table 3 shows that members of the Rejo Rejo farmer group are included in the active category in participating in the planning stage. As many as 20 members of farmer groups, or 66.67%, actively participate in regular farmer group meetings, while 7 members of farmer groups, or 23.33%, sometimes participate in regular farmer group meetings, and 3 members of farmer groups, or 10% do not actively participate in regular farmer group meetings. This is relevant to the results of research conducted by Koampa *et al.*, (2015), which also shows that the activeness of farmer group members is very important for the strengthening and progress of farmer groups.

As many as 17 members of farmer groups, or 56.67 %, actively provide suggestions and input, especially in determining a farmer group's decision in preparing a work plan. Meanwhile, 8 farmer group members, or 26.67%, sometimes participated in providing suggestions and input, and 5 farmer group members, or 16.67%, did not offer advice and information. The findings show that it is in

line with research conducted by Koampa *et al.*, (2015), which showed that the participation of farmer group members was relatively high in providing advice and input to farmer group administrators. The increasing number of suggestions and information from group members shows that group members have a critical mindset and have the awareness to advance farmer groups together. Farmers' involvement in providing recommendations, suggestions, and input is expected to increase the knowledge and attitudes of farmers toward integrated and integrated farming models (Muchtar, 2016)

The 15 farmer group members, 50% actively participated in preparing work plans to be carried out by farmer groups. In comparison, 10 members of farmer groups, or 33.33%, sometimes participated in preparing work plans, and 5 members, or 16.67%, did not. Participate in organizing the work plan. In contrast to the results of research conducted by Anis *et al.*, (2014), which showed that the participation of farmer group members in preparing plans (RDK) Definitive Group Plans / (RDKK) Definitive Group Needs Plans was included in the category with low participation. Participation of farmer group members will arise because of group cultural factors and positive behavior in group life as the main elements that become the glue of family ties within group members. These conditions indicate the high intensity of the relationship between group member bonds and participation in group activities in the process of preparing farmer group work plans (Reza *et al.*, 2019)

Table 3. Participation in the planning stage

| Indicators in the Planning Stage | Criteria | Evaluation | Answer | Values Table | Value Weight (%) |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------|--------------|------------------|
| Join the Meeting | a. Follow | 3 | 20 | 60 | 66.67 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 7 | 14 | 23.33 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 3 | 3 | 10.00 |
| Provide Suggestions and Input. | a. Follow | 3 | 17 | 51 | 56.67 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 8 | 16 | 26.67 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 5 | 5 | 16.67 |
| Make a Work Plan | a. Follow | 3 | 15 | 45 | 50.00 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 10 | 20 | 33.33 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 5 | 5 | 16.67 |

The high intensity of farmer participation at the planning stage is due to the increased involvement of members in attending scheduled meetings or meetings and actively participating in providing input during sessions to formulate group activities, the high frequency of member attendance, the functional level of members in discussions, preparing discussion materials that members will convey during group meetings, member participation in providing suggestions, and member participation in giving advice and input to determine efforts that can be made to increase production and productivity of farmer group's members. Overall, at the planning stage, all members of the Rejo Dam farmer group actively participated, starting from participating in regular farmer group meetings, providing advice and input, and preparing work plans to be carried out by the farmer groups. This is reinforced by the total score on the planning stage participation indicator 219, which is included in the active category.

Implementation Stage

At this implementation stage, 3 activity indicators are generally carried out routinely by farmer groups: participation in farmer group activities in Irrigation Improvement, Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement, and Pest Control. The involvement of farmer group members in the implementation stage can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that most of the Waduk Rejo farmer group members actively participated in the implementation stage. As many as 16 farmer group members, or 53.33%, are active in participating in farmer group's activities in Irrigation Improvement, while 8 farmer group members, or 26.67%, sometimes join in participating the Irrigation Improvement, and 6 members of farmer groups or 20% do not participate in participating in Irrigation Improvements. This activity of implementing irrigation repairs is usually carried out if irrigation canals are damaged due to blockages. In addition to carrying out repairs, the farmer group members also opened irrigation channels to the farmers' fields because the irrigation channels were not distributed simultaneously but alternately between areas.

As many as 17 members of the farmer group, or 56.67%, actively participated in various farmer group activities in the form of Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement. In comparison, 7 members of the farmer group, or 23.33%, sometimes participated in participating in various farmer group activities in the form of Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement, and 6 members of farmer

groups, or 20%, did not join in participating in various farmer group activities in the form of Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement and repairing agricultural infrastructure such as repairing roads in rice fields, and periodically servicing agricultural equipment such as tractors, rice milling machines, etc.

Table 4. Participation in the implementation stage

| Indicator Participation in the Implementation Stage | Criteria | Evaluation | Answer | Values Table | Value Weight (%) |
|---|------------------|------------|--------|--------------|------------------------|
| Irrigation Repair | a. Follow | 3 | 16 | 48 | 53.33 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 8 | 16 | 26.67 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 6 | 6 | 20.00 |
| Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement | a. Follow | 3 | 17 | 51 | 56.67 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 7 | 14 | 23.33 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 6 | 6 | 23.33 |
| Pest Control | a. Follow | 3 | 19 | 57 | 63.33 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 8 | 16 | 26.67 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 3 | 3 | 10.00 |

As many as 19 members of the farmer group, or 63.33%, actively participate in various farmer group activities in the form of Pest Control, while 8 members of the farmer group, or 26.67%, sometimes participate in participating in Pest Control, and 3 group member's farmers or 10% do not participate in participating in Pest Control. Control of this pest is usually the control of rat pests with the term *gobyog rats*, which use a tool called a rat composter using dry straw which is burned, resulting in smoke that is put into the rat holes.

The problem with participation in the implementation of activities is that it is difficult for some members of the farmer group to spend time among members of other farmer groups related to farmer group activities. There is still a lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure for farmer group activities such as rat composting tools. In addition, there is still some farmers' participation which is classified as low in participating in the implementation of farmer group activities, which is due to the perception that the lack of significant benefits that can be felt by farmers materially, the location and distance of farmers who are pretty far from the area of the house to go to the activity location.

Overall at the implementation stage, all Rejo Dam farmer group members actively participated, starting from participating in Irrigation Improvement, Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement, and Controlling Pests. This is reinforced by evidence that the total score on the participation indicator in the implementation phase is 217, which is included in the active category. This is relevant to the research of Koampa et al., (2015), which states that a small proportion of members who do not participate in farmer group activities are members who are old, so they are physically unable to participate in farmer group activities. This research is also relevant to the results of the study from Nazaruddin & Anwarudin (2019), which shows that participation in the activity implementation stage is relatively high, but inversely proportional to the decision-making and activity evaluation stages which are included in the low level of participation category, because at the decision-making stage and Evaluation of activities is mainly carried out by the management of farmer groups.

Supervision Stage

At the monitoring stage, it is essential to monitor and evaluate the activities that have been carried out previously by farmer groups. This supervision stage is the stage for supervising Irrigation Improvement activities, Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement in the form of Pest Control that members of farmer groups have carried out. The farmer group members' participation at the monitoring stage is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that most of the Waduk Rejo farmer group's members actively participate in the supervision stage. As many as 17 members of farmer groups, or 56.67%, actively participated in irrigation repair supervision activities. In comparison, 6 farmer group members, or 20%, sometimes participated in irrigation repair supervision activities, and 7 members of farmer groups, or 23.33%, did not join in participating in irrigation improvement supervision activities. Supervision of irrigation repairs is carried out routinely once a week by members of the farmer group who have been specially assigned to supervise the irrigation section.

Table 5. Participation in the supervision stage

| Indicator Participation in the Supervision Stage | Criteria | Evaluation | Answer | Values Table | Value Weight (%) |
|--|------------------|------------|--------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Supervision on Irrigation Improvement | a. Follow | 3 | 17 | 51 | 56.67 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 6 | 12 | 20.00 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 7 | 7 | 23.33 |
| Supervision of Agricultural Infrastructure Improvements | a. Follow | 3 | 16 | 48 | 53.33 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 8 | 16 | 26.67 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 6 | 6 | 20.00 |
| Pest Control Monitoring | a. Follow | 3 | 16 | 48 | 53.33 |
| | b. Sometimes | 2 | 8 | 16 | 26.67 |
| | c. Do not follow | 1 | 6 | 6 | 20.00 |

As many as 16 members of the farmer group, or 53.33%, actively participated in the Improvement of Agricultural Infrastructure supervision activities. In comparison, 8 members of the farmer group, or 26.67%, sometimes participated in the supervision activities for the Improvement of Agricultural Infrastructure, and 6 members of the farmer group, or 20 %, did not join in participating in the supervision of Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement. Control of agricultural infrastructure repairs is carried out routinely once a month by members of farmer groups who have been specially assigned and have the expertise to supervise the agricultural infrastructure repair section.

As many as 16 farmer group members, or 53.33%, participated in Pest Control monitoring activities. In comparison, 8 farmer group members, or 26.67%, sometimes participated in Pest Control monitoring activities, and 6 farmer group members, or 20%, did not. Participate in participating in pest control monitoring activities. Supervision of pest control is carried out routinely every once a week, especially when the harvest season arrives, by members of farmer groups who have been specifically assigned and have the expertise to supervise the pest control section, especially rat pests.

Overall, at the monitoring stage, all Rejo Dam farmer group members actively participated, starting from participating in the supervision activities for Irrigation Improvement, Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement, and Pest Control. This is evidenced by the total score on the participation indicator in the monitoring stage, which is 210 and included in the active category. It is relevant to the research of Manein *et al.*, (2016) that showed the participation of farmer group members at the monitoring stage was included in the active category. The active involvement of farmer group members at the monitoring stage shows that they have realized the importance of monitoring and evaluating activities (Puspitaningsih *et al.*, 2016).

Overall, it shows that most of the Rejo Dam farmer group members actively participated in various stages of carrying out their duties as members of the farmer group. Starting from participation in the planning stage, implementation stage, and monitoring stage are included in the active category. This proves that members of farmer groups have high awareness and concern for working together to achieve better production and productivity. In addition, the activities within the farmer group can also increase cohesiveness, cooperation, caring, and kinship among the farmer group's members.

CONCLUSION

The participation of Waduk Rejo farmer group members, starting from the planning, implementation, and monitoring stages, was included in the active category. Only a minority of the Waduk Rejo farmer group members are not involved in every step. Thus, the Rejo reservoir farmer group members generally have high awareness and concern for developing and advancing the Rejo Reservoir farmer group. Even though the participation of the majority of the farmer group's members, starting from participation in the planning, implementation, and monitoring stages, was included in the active category, a small number of farmer group members have never been involved in various farmer group activities. So that there is a need for a stimulus that needs to be carried out by agricultural extension workers so that they can increase the enthusiasm and participation of members, especially members who have been inactive in participating in farmer group activities. One strategy to increase member involvement is to foster kinship among members of other farmer groups and get closer to group members so that movements in farmer groups run smoothly, as well as efforts to improve facilities and support group activities such as tractors, rat composters, and sprayers. , and subsidized fertilizer assistance to develop farmer businesses.

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