



Research/Review Article

Research Methods as the Basis for Village Policy with an Evidence-Based Policy Approach

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Abstract: This study aims to formulate an integrative conceptual framework regarding the role of research methods in the formation of evidence-based village policy (EBP). The main focus is how qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research can be used to produce more inclusive, transparent, and accountable policies in the context of village development in Indonesia. This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to scientific publications indexed by Scopus, Web of Science, and SINTA for the period 2015–2025. The literature synthesis shows that research methods play a crucial role in identifying village community needs, improving data quality, and strengthening accountability in the policy formulation process. The EBP approach has been shown to encourage citizen participation, increase transparency in village fund allocation, and minimize the dominance of short-term political interests. However, its implementation faces challenges such as limited capacity of village officials, inadequate data infrastructure, and low policy literacy at the local level. These findings are relevant for strengthening village capacity in managing development funds, developing policies based on the real needs of residents, and promoting social accountability. This article makes a new contribution to the local public policy literature by emphasizing the importance of research as an instrument for strengthening village governance.

Keywords: Community Participation; Evidence-Based Policy; Policy Research; Sustainable Development; Village Governance

1. Introduction

Village policies play a strategic role in national development because they directly impact the well-being of grassroots communities. Since the reforms and decentralization, village governments have gained broader authority in planning and implementing development, particularly through the village fund mechanism.[9]However, various studies show that village policies often face classic problems, such as the practice of money politics in village head elections.[14],weak accountability in the implementation of public policy[11], as well as the high risk of corruption in the management of village funds[8]This situation demonstrates the need for a more evidence-based policy approach so that decisions are not solely influenced by political interests, but are based on valid data and research results.[20].

The implementation of evidence-based policies in villages aligns with the principles of good governance and public accountability as mandated by decentralization regulations. Empirically, recent studies have shown that community participation plays a crucial role in promoting the effectiveness of village policies. For example, a study [21] found that village development often ignores poor and marginalized groups even though participation mechanisms are available, while studies [22] emphasizes the importance of community involvement in environmentally conscious, sustainable village development. Furthermore, the application of digital technology is also beginning to play a role in expanding citizen participation through digital participatory budgeting.[18]and digital village governance [29], [30] which can increase transparency and legitimacy of policies.

Appropriate research methods are the foundation for producing evidence-based village policies. The literature on research methods emphasizes the importance of

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integrating quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches to capture the complexity of social phenomena.[12],[5], [28].This approach supports a more in-depth analysis of the factors influencing the success of village policies, including collaborative governance.[6]and transparent decision-making process[19].Thus, the application of research methods in the formulation of village policies not only answers the normative need for accountability, but also provides a strong empirical and theoretical basis for achieving inclusive and sustainable village development.

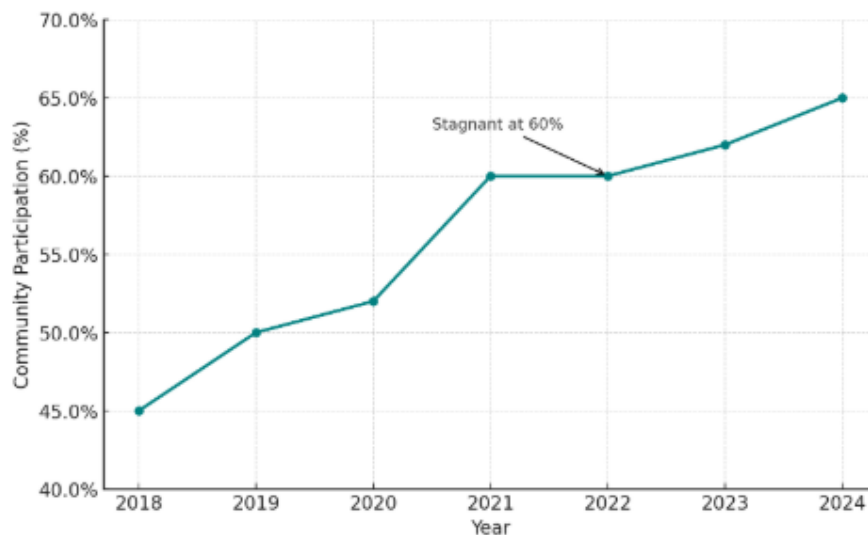


Figure 1: Village Deliberation Participation Level (2018-2024).

Figure 1 above shows the trend in community participation in Village Deliberations from 2018 to 2024. Overall, participation rates have increased significantly, from 45% in 2018 to 65% in 2024. This indicates a growing collective awareness among villagers to participate in the decision-making process. However, the graph also shows a stagnation phase in 2022, where participation did not increase despite the previous positive trend. This stagnation phenomenon indicates that the increase in community participation is not yet fully consistent, so there are still inhibiting factors that need to be addressed. Therefore, a systematic research methodology is needed to identify the causes of fluctuations and formulate evidence-based policy strategies. By strengthening the database and involving the community in evidence-sharing forums, villages can build more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable participatory governance.

2. Research Methodology

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SRB) approach to examine scientific publications discussing research methods, village governance, community participation, and the application of Evidence-Based Policy in the context of village development in Indonesia and other developing countries. Evidence-based policy in villages cannot be separated from three main foundations: normative, empirical, and theoretical. The normative foundation emphasizes the importance of accountability and the principles of good governance in public governance.[15],[17].The empirical basis underscores the role of community participation, local leadership and the use of digital technology in increasing the legitimacy of village policies.[9], [21], [29].Meanwhile, the theoretical basis rests on mastery of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research methods as a tool to produce more accurate and contextual policies.[12], [5], [28]With this framework, TPS aims to synthesize scientific findings and evaluate how research can inform more inclusive, accountable, and sustainable village policies.

Research Questions

- How are research methods conceptualized and used in the context of village policy?
- What relationship exists between research methods, public participation, and the effectiveness of evidence-based policies?
- What models or frameworks have been proposed, and what research gaps remain?

Search Strategy

The databases used in the search included: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, JSTOR, DOAJ, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, and Google Scholar. The search criteria were limited to articles published between 2015 and 2025, in English or Indonesian, peer-reviewed, and focused on village governance, evidence-based public policy, and social research methodology.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

- a) Includes: Empirical studies on village policies, conceptual models on evidence-based policy, research on social research methods and community participation.
- b) Excluded: Non-social technical articles (e.g. pure engineering), opinion articles without peer-review, and non-scientific publications.

Data Analysis

A total of 120 articles were identified in the initial search phase, then screened according to inclusion/exclusion criteria. Of these, 30 articles were selected for further analysis. These articles were mapped using thematic analysis to identify patterns in the application of research methods to village policy. Key concepts such as good governance, community participation, digital governance, and research methodology were mapped and synthesized into a conceptual model of evidence-based village policy.

3. Findings and Synthesis

The Role of Research Methods in Village Policy

Research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, play a central role in providing an objective picture of the social, economic, and cultural conditions of a village. Household surveys, for example, are used to identify poverty levels, income distribution, and basic community needs.[9], [22].Meanwhile, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation can explore the needs of vulnerable groups and reveal power dynamics at the local level.[21], [12], [5].Recent literature also emphasizes that mixed methods approaches are increasingly important because they are able to combine the power of broad quantitative data with the depth of qualitative data.[28].Thus, research methods are not only academic tools, but also strategic instruments in building more relevant, responsive and inclusive village policies.

Evidence-Based Policy as an Approach

EBP is seen as an innovative approach that enables village governments to develop policies based on real data, not just perceptions or political interests. Policies designed through EBP have proven more effective in increasing citizen participation, transparency, and accountability in village government.[15], [17], [3].For example, the use of digital participatory budgeting shows how community aspiration data can be systematically integrated into development planning.[18], [26].In addition, research shows that villages that implement EBP principles tend to be more successful in optimizing village fund management, minimizing irregularities, and strengthening the legitimacy of local government.[11], [10].In other words, EBP serves as a bridge between research findings and public interest-oriented policy practices.

Implementation Challenges

Despite its significant potential, EBP implementation in villages faces several obstacles. First, the capacity of village officials to conduct research and analyze data remains limited, both in terms of skills and human resources.[20].Second, support for data infrastructure and information systems is still minimal, so many villages rely on fragmented and not always accurate sectoral data.[29], [30].Third, the low level of policy literacy culture among village officials and the community means that research results are often not utilized optimally in the planning process.[21], [20].This situation results in many village policies still being dominated by political or short-term considerations, rather than being oriented

towards evidence and long-term needs. Therefore, strategies to increase village research capacity, integrate digital technology, and strengthen a culture of policy literacy are needed to ensure the sustainability of EBP implementation at the village level.

4. Novelty: Research Methods as the Foundation for Evidence-Based Village Policy

In facing the complexities of modern village development, research methods are no longer merely passive academic tools but must be positioned as strategic elements that support the effectiveness of public policy. The integrated use of quantitative and qualitative research methods has emerged as a new concept in village governance due to its ability to provide an objective picture of local social, economic, and cultural conditions.[12];[28]; [28].As a strategic object, research methods function as data validation instruments to ensure that village policies are based on the real needs of the community, not just perceptions or political interests.[9]; [22].As a strategic subject, research methods play an active role in strengthening citizen participation, transparency of processes, and accountability of policies designed by village governments.[15];[17]; [3].

This new paradigm marks a shift from traditional approaches that often lead to village policy being dominated by intuition, political pressure, or short-term interests. Village Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) offers a more balanced combination of normative, empirical, and theoretical approaches through the use of survey data, participatory interviews, and the integration of digital technology in development planning.[18]; [26].Digital governance innovations such as participatory budgeting and participatory village mapping further strengthen this capacity by creating more inclusive and verifiable databases.[10]; [1].Thus, the idea of promoting research methods as the main foundation of evidence-based village policies is not only relevant, but also urgent, as it provides a new path towards adaptive, transparent and sustainable village governance.

5. Conceptual Model

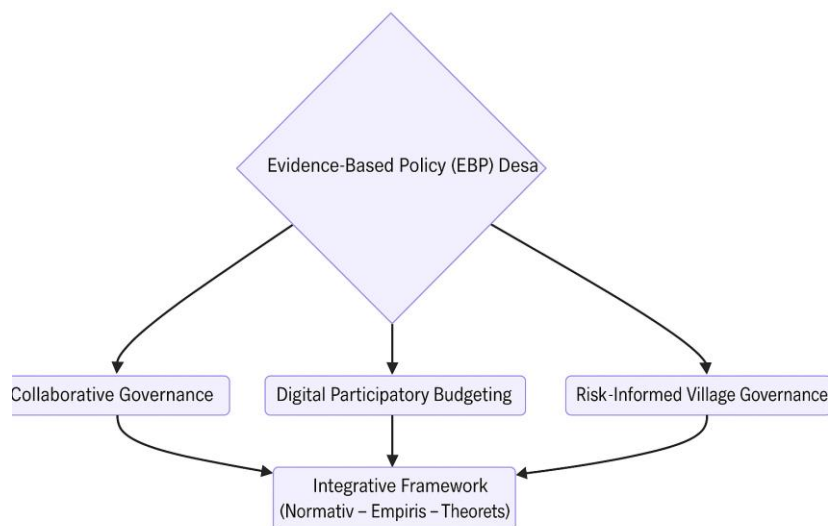


Figure 2: Conceptual flow of Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) implementation at the village level.

Figure 2 above shows the conceptual flow of Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) implementation at the village level. Three main frameworks—Collaborative Governance, Digital Participatory Budgeting (DPB), and Risk-Informed Village Governance—are presented as complementary foundations. Collaborative Governance emphasizes synergy between village governments, communities, and external actors through valid citizen participation as both data and policy legitimacy. Meanwhile, Digital Participatory Budgeting provides transparency and real-time participation through digital technology, thereby reducing the dominance of local elites in development planning. Risk-Informed Village Governance emphasizes the importance of analyzing social, economic, and environmental risks to ensure accountable and sustainable village fund management.

All of these frameworks ultimately lead to the Normative–Empirical–Theoretical Integrative Framework, which is the main conceptual contribution. This integration combines normative principles of good governance, an empirical basis in the form of community participation data, and theoretical approaches from social research methodology. The result is a more adaptive, inclusive, and data-driven village EBP model, while simultaneously expanding the scope of previous, still partial research. Thus, this diagram emphasizes that social research serves not merely as an academic instrument but as a strategic foundation for building evidence-based village policies oriented toward sustainability and public legitimacy.

6. Policy Implications and Strategic Recommendations

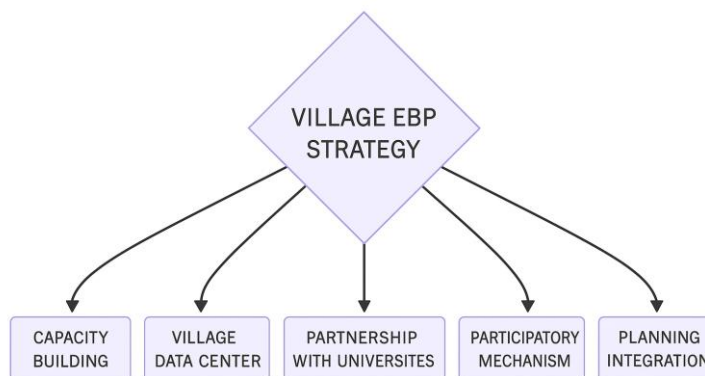


Figure 3: Policy Implications and Strategic Recommendations.

Figure 3 above presents a simple and concise strategy for implementing Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) at the village level. The main strategy is placed in the center as the root idea, then branched into five key recommendations. Each branch represents a practical step that villages can take to strengthen evidence-based governance, ranging from strengthening the capacity of civil servants, establishing a data center, to strategic partnerships with research institutions. This visualization helps readers grasp the core ideas without having to read lengthy descriptions, making the article easier to understand and more communicative.

The five recommendations emphasize the importance of improving the research capacity of village officials, the availability of village data centers as information repositories, and village-university partnerships to improve data quality and validity. Furthermore, participatory mechanisms such as evidence-sharing forums are needed to facilitate more democratic decisions, as well as the integration of research findings into village planning systems such as the RPJMDes and RKPDes. This visual narrative provides readers with a glimpse into how villages can move toward more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable policies through the implementation of EBP.

7. Conclusion

The research method proposed in this article marks a significant shift in the village policy paradigm, where research is no longer viewed merely as a passive academic instrument but as a strategic subject that actively supports the effectiveness and accountability of village governance. By integrating qualitative research that explores community needs, quantitative research that presents objective data, and mixed methods that connect the two, this approach presents an integrative solution to address the complex challenges of village development in the era of decentralization and digitalization. This thinking encourages a transformation from perception-based policies to evidence-based policies that are inclusive, transparent, and sustainable.

Through a systematic literature review, this article formulates three main findings: first, the role of research methods in mapping the real needs of village communities and

uncovering issues of vulnerable groups; second, the effectiveness of Evidence-Based Policy in increasing citizen participation, transparency of village fund allocation, and policy accountability; and third, implementation challenges in the form of limited apparatus capacity, data infrastructure, and local policy literacy. The proposed conceptual model of Village EBP demonstrates how the synergy between normative, empirical, and theoretical foundations can form a policy framework that is not only conceptually robust but also practically relevant. Its policy implications emphasize the need to strengthen research capacity in villages, digitize governance, and increase community participation as active partners in development. Thus, this study provides theoretical and practical contributions in building adaptive, accountable, and competitive villages in facing the challenges of sustainable development.

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