
The Influence of Village Fund Allocation on Economic Growth in South Sumatra Province 2016–2023

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the effect of Village Fund Allocation (ADD) on economic growth in South Sumatra Province during the period from 2016 to 2023. Employing a quantitative approach with an econometric model, this research applies multiple regression techniques to examine the impact of ADD on regional economic growth indicators. The analysis results indicate that village fund allocation significantly influences economic growth, particularly in the infrastructure and community empowerment sectors. The findings reveal that a 1% increase in ADD contributes to a 0.5% rise in Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). This study contributes to the understanding of the role of village fund allocation policies in promoting regional economic growth, with practical implications for enhancing the efficiency of village fund management.

Keywords: *Village Fund Allocation, Economic Growth, Regional Development, South Sumatra, GRDP*

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1. Introduction

Economic growth is a key indicator of the success of regional economic development. It reflects economic progress, structural transformation, improved welfare, and the continuous advancement of a region's economy (Saputra, 2024). Achieving balanced economic growth requires attention to local-level development, as local regions serve as centers of economic activity and community welfare (Elsyan et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, achieving equitable economic growth remains a significant challenge, especially at the local level. The persistent disparity between urban and rural areas continues to be a pressing issue in many developing countries, including Indonesia. To address this imbalance, the Indonesian government has implemented fiscal decentralization through the Village Fund Allocation (Alokasi Dana Desa, ADD) policy—an initiative aligned with the global agenda for inclusive and sustainable development as emphasized in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (World Bank, 2019; Blackwell, 2015).

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ADD plays a critical role in Indonesia's development strategy. Based on Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, villages have been granted autonomy in managing their finances and development initiatives. Previously functioning merely as administrative units, villages have now been empowered with budgeting authority, asset management responsibilities, and financial reporting obligations (Andri & Dinarjito, 2021). This policy shift aims to lay a strong institutional foundation for equitable and just rural development (Zain & Deviani, 2024; Akmalia et al., 2024).

The Village Fund functions as a fiscal stimulus to finance governance, development, and community empowerment programs led by village governments, often involving participatory planning and execution. Since its introduction through the national budget (APBN) in 2015, the allocation has increased annually and has been accompanied by relatively high absorption rates (Ritonga et al., 2021). This mechanism is expected to foster local economic development and reduce interregional disparities (Allya et al., 2024; Alie, 2023).

South Sumatra Province has been selected as the study area due to its status as the second-fastest-growing province in Indonesia after the Riau Islands, with a recorded growth rate of 5.08 percent in 2023 (BPS Sumsel, 2023). The province's economy, as measured by the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at current prices, demonstrated strong performance, with the highest growth recorded in the accommodation and food services sector on the production side, and in foreign consumption expenditures on the expenditure side.

Figure 1 illustrates the economic growth patterns across 13 regencies in South Sumatra from 2016 to 2023. Overall, most regions showed positive growth trends, although certain areas experienced notable fluctuations. Regencies such as Ogan Komering Ulu (OKU), Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI), and Muara Enim consistently recorded stable and positive economic growth. In contrast, areas like Lahat, South OKU, and Empat Lawang experienced more erratic trends, including periods of economic contraction.

Meanwhile, regencies such as Musi Banyuasin, Banyuasin, and Musi Rawas maintained relatively stable and strong growth throughout the period, highlighting their role in supporting the regional economy. Similarly, Penukal Abab Lematang Ilir (PALI) and North Musi Rawas—despite being newer administrative regions—demonstrated encouraging growth trends. Ogan Ilir and East OKU also exhibited steady development, suggesting sustained efforts toward regional advancement.

Several studies have examined the impact of Village Fund Allocation on economic growth, though findings vary by region and analytical approach. Prasetyo and Dinarjito (2021), using panel data and a Fixed Effect Model (FEM), found that ADD and the Human Development Index (HDI) significantly influenced economic growth in Indonesia with coefficients of 0.042436 and 0.059278, respectively, and t-significance values below 0.01. In contrast, Ritonga et al. (2021) reported a negative coefficient of -6.1914 for ADD during the same period. Gobel (2022), applying

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), also confirmed the significant effect of ADD with a coefficient of 0.130 ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, Rimawan and Aryani (2019) found that ADD had a positive effect on local growth in Bima Regency using SEM-PLS analysis.

Beyond ADD, other factors such as the Construction Cost Index (CCI), HDI, and local budget (APBD) have also been shown to influence regional economic performance. In Papua Province, Elsyhan et al. (2020) revealed that CCI had a significant effect on economic growth (coefficient = 0.001592; $p < 0.05$). Saputra (2024) further demonstrated in the former Surakarta Residency area that variables such as CCI, the Poverty Severity Index, and average per capita expenditure had significant impacts on GRDP, with respective coefficients of 0.349064, -0.063236, and 0.510584.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the direction and magnitude of the influence of Village Fund Allocation (ADD), Human Development Index (HDI), Regional Budget (APBD), Construction Cost Index (CCI), Number of Public Health Centers (HEALTH), Investment (INV), and Employment (EMP) on Economic Growth (EG) across 13 regencies in South Sumatra Province during the 2016–2023 period.

2. Theoretical Background

The Solow economic growth model introduced labor and technology as critical components of the growth process, in contrast to the Harrod-Domar approach which emphasized capital accumulation. Solow argued that technological advancement is an essential exogenous factor influencing long-term growth. He also demonstrated that in the long run, income per worker tends to converge across economies, provided that factors such as savings, depreciation, labor force growth, and productivity are balanced. Moreover, open economies tend to grow faster due to capital inflows from developed to developing countries, although barriers to foreign investment can hinder this growth rate (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

In contrast, Fischer (2011), as cited in Aspiansyah & Damayanti (2019), developed a Spatial MRW Model by incorporating spatial dimensions, assuming that each region has a Cobb-Douglas production function. This model provides a more comprehensive framework by linking regional output to factors such as physical capital, human capital, labor, and technological knowledge possessed by each region.

Meanwhile, endogenous growth models offer a different perspective by removing the assumption of diminishing returns to capital investment. These models emphasize the importance of investing in education and technology to enhance productivity and sustain long-term growth. The theory explains why poorer countries do not automatically catch up with wealthier nations. Income disparities may even widen, particularly after economic crises, as advanced economies are better positioned to capitalize on technological and investment advantages (Harris, 2007).

Beyond capital, technology, and labor, geographical location also plays a significant role in economic growth. Location theory highlights how a region's geographic position can affect access to resources, markets, and infrastructure—all of which are vital for economic development. By integrating spatial analysis with economic variables, this theory aids in understanding how historical development and contemporary challenges shape regional growth patterns.

Michael Kremer's economic development theory, known as the O-ring Theory, emphasizes the importance of optimal coordination across various production activities to generate high value. The concept is based on complementarities, supported by specialization, division of labor, and economies of scale. This theory also addresses the poverty trap, wherein low-income countries remain stuck in underdevelopment, while high-income countries experience accelerated growth. The production framework in the O-ring Theory provides deeper insights into how complementarities among firms or industrial sectors are critical to fostering sustainable economic development (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

The Modernization Theory of Harrod-Domar rests on three key views. First, it categorizes societies into two types: traditional—typically found in developing countries—and modern—common in developed nations. Second, modernization is considered a process in which developed countries play a crucial role by disseminating modern values and providing technology and capital to support transformation. This theory also asserts that development failures often stem from internal obstacles, such as traditional lifestyles, rather than external influences. Finally, development is seen as a universal process applicable across time and space. Modernization involves advancing toward a more developed way of life by replacing traditional practices with modern technologies or methods (Ally et al., 2024).

Schumpeter's theory of economic growth emphasizes the central role of innovation as the primary driver of economic development. According to Schumpeter, economic progress occurs mainly through innovation. Entrepreneurs who create innovations and take risks—such as introducing new products, production methods, or entering new markets—trigger waves of economic growth. He also argued that innovation is the key factor sustaining long-term growth under capitalism (Dwi & Wijaya, 2024).

3. Methodology

The analytical tool used in this research is panel data regression, based on the following econometric model:

$$PE_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ADD_{it} + \beta_2 IPM_{it} + \beta_3 APBD_{it} + \beta_4 IKK_{it} + \beta_5 HEALTH_{it} + \beta_5 EMP_{it} + \varepsilon_t$$

PE	=	Economic Growth (%)
ADD	=	Village Fund Allocation (Rp Million)
IPM	=	Human Development Index (%)
APBD	=	Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (Rp Billion)

IKK	=	Construction Cost Index (%)
HEALTH	=	Number of Community Health Centers (Units)
EMP	=	Number of Workers (Persons)
ε	=	Error term (faktor kesalahan)
β_0	=	Constant
$\beta_1 \cdots \beta_4$	=	Coefficient of regression for the independent variable
i	=	Data Cross Section
t	=	Data Time Series

The econometric model employed in this study is a synthesis of several previously established models. The Construction Cost Index (IKK) variable is adapted from Saputra (2024), while the Human Development Index (IPM) and Village Fund Allocation (ADD) variables are drawn from the model by Andri & Dinarjito (2021). The Regional Budget (APBD) variable is based on the model developed by Airy Putri et al. (2021), the number of public health centers (HEALTH) is derived from Rama (2023), investment (INV) from Dira et al. (2023), and employment (EMP) from Sabrina & Suhartono (2023). It is hypothesized that variables such as IKK, IPM, ADD, HEALTH, and INV significantly influence Economic Growth (EG), whereas APBD and EMP are expected to have no significant impact on EG.

The study utilizes secondary data sourced from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS). The dataset comprises panel data that combines both time series and cross-sectional dimensions. The time series covers the period from 2016 to 2023, while the cross-sectional data includes 13 regencies within South Sumatra Province.

The panel regression analysis proceeds through several stages: parameter estimation using the Pooled Least Squares (PLS), Fixed Effects Model (FEM), and Random Effects Model (REM); model selection based on the Chow test, Hausman test, and where necessary, the Lagrange Multiplier test; assessment of model goodness-of-fit for the selected specification; and finally, validity testing of the influence of independent variables on the selected model.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

The findings from the econometric models, employing Pooled Least Square (PLS), Fixed Effect Model (FEM), and Random Effect Model (REM) methods, are outlined in Table 1, along with the outcomes of model selection tests.

Table 1. Results of the Estimation of the Panel-Cross Section Data Econometric Regression Model

Variabel	Koefisien Regresi		
	PLS	FEM	REM
C	14.15680	49.31644	16.08624
LOG(ADD)	-2.876544	-3.417996	-2.931415
LOG(APBD)	0.115952	0.085131	0.114063
IKK	0.409197	0.340092	0.408394
IPM	0.232188	-2.293107	0.125726
HEALTH	0.059239	-0.042457	0.061238
EMP	8.31E-06	2.270000	8.680000
R^2	0.136794	0.218090	0.126947
<i>AdjustedR</i> ²	0.082843	0.050538	0.072381
Statistik F	2.535544	1.301624	2.326496
Prob.Statistik F	0.025374	0.208176	0.038519

Uji Pemilihan Model

(1) Chow

Cross-Section $F(12,84) = 0.727800$; Prob. $F(12,84)=0.7205$

(2) Hausman

Cross-Section random $\chi^2(6) = 1.804968$; Prob. $\chi^2(7)=0.9367$

(3) Lagrange Multiplier

Cross-Section Breusch-Pagan = 0.99325; Prob. $F=0.3189$

Source: BPS; DJPK KEMENKEU, processed by the author

Since the Chow Test and the Hausman Test did not identify the same model as the best fit, the Lagrange Multiplier Test was performed. The results of the Lagrange Multiplier Test indicate that the Common Effect Model (CEM) was selected as the best estimated model, as evidenced by the F-statistic value of 2.535544 and its associated probability of 0.025374 (< 0.05). The complete estimation results for the CEM model are presented in Table 2:

Table 2.
Model Estimasi Common Effect Model (CEM)

$$\begin{aligned}
 PE_{it} = & 14.15680 - 2.876544 \log(ADD)_{it} + 0.115952 IKK_{it} + 0.409197 IPM_{it} \\
 & (0.0440)** \quad (0.1330) \quad (0.0852)*** \\
 & + 0.232188 \log(APBD)_{it} + 0.059239 HEALTH + 8.310006 EMP_{it} \\
 & (0.8907) \quad (0.4434) \quad (0.1887)
 \end{aligned}$$

$$R^2 = 0.136794; DW = 2.253940; F = 2.535544; \text{Prob.}F = 0.025374$$

Source: Appendix 1. **Note:** *Significant at $\alpha = 0.01$; **Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$; ***Significant at $\alpha = 0.10$; The numbers in parentheses are the probabilities of the t-statistic value.

Based on Table 2, the estimated Common Effect Model (CEM) is statistically valid, with an F-statistic probability value of 0.025374 (< 0.05), indicating that the model as a whole is significant. However, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is only 0.136794, suggesting that the model has a relatively low explanatory power in predicting economic growth. Among the six variables included in the econometric model, only two exhibit a statistically significant and positive influence on Economic Growth: Village Fund Allocation (ADD) and the Human Development Index (HDI), with empirical t-statistic probabilities of 0.0440 (< 0.05) and 0.0852 (< 0.1), respectively. The remaining four variables—Regional Budget (APBD), Construction Cost Index (CCI), number of public health centers (HEALTH), and employment (EMP)—do not demonstrate a statistically significant impact on Economic Growth.

The Village Fund Allocation variable shows a regression coefficient of -2.876544 within a linear-logarithmic relationship. This implies that a 1% increase in ADD is associated with a 0.0288% decrease in Economic Growth, while a 1% decrease in ADD corresponds to a 0.0288% increase in Economic Growth. In contrast, the Human Development Index exhibits a linear-linear relationship with a regression coefficient of 0.232188. This indicates that a one-point increase in HDI leads to a 0.2322% rise in Economic Growth, whereas a one-point decrease in HDI results in a corresponding decline in growth.

5. Discussion

The empirical findings from the Common Effect Model (CEM) estimation indicate that only two variables—Village Fund Allocation (VFA) and the Human Development Index (HDI)—have a statistically significant impact on economic growth in South Sumatra Province over the 2016–2023 period, while the remaining variables do not exhibit significant effects. To delve deeper into the mechanisms by which each variable influences growth, theoretical analyses drawn from economic development literature and established growth theories serve as the interpretive foundation.

Village Fund Allocation (VFA) exerts a significant influence on economic growth in South Sumatra during 2016–2023. A negative impact of VFA on growth can be understood through the lens of Institutional Economics as articulated by Douglas North, who emphasizes that institutional quality critically determines economic policy effectiveness. In contexts where village governance is weak, VFA may generate economic inefficiencies through corruption, resource misallocation, and low accountability, ultimately leading to stagnation or contraction in growth (Akmalia et al., 2024). This interpretation aligns with the core tenets of endogenous growth theory, which posit that infrastructure investment and rural economic programs yield positive outcomes only when supported by innovation, human capacity enhancement, and sound governance. Hence, to optimize the growth contribution of village funds, institutional reform, enhanced transparency, and sustainable development strategies tailored to local potentials are imperative (Harris, 2007).

The Regional Government Budget (RGB) appears to have no significant effect on economic growth in South Sumatra for the 2016–2023 period. Public finance theory and government budget literature help explain this ineffectiveness. Richard Musgrave's Theory of Public Finance underscores that government spending must be productive to generate multiplier effects; if budget allocations favor routine expenditures over capital investments, their growth impact remains limited (Hamdi & Widiastuti, 2021). Moreover, Robert Barro's crowding-out theory suggests that inefficient government spending can deter private investment, undermining overall economic expansion. Fiscal federalism theory, as advanced by Wallace Oates, further highlights the necessity of synchronizing central and local policy to ensure that budget allocations align with regional economic needs. Consequently, reforming RGB management to prioritize productive outlays, improve budget efficiency, and strengthen policy coordination is crucial for enhancing its growth-promoting role (Hanif et al., 2020).

The Construction Cost Index (CCI) did not exhibit a significant effect on growth in South Sumatra between 2016 and 2023. Insights from infrastructure investment and development theories elucidate why. While Aschauer (1989) argues that effective public infrastructure investment can boost private-sector productivity and foster growth, projects that lack productivity or sustainability deliver minimal impact, a point underscored by endogenous growth theory's emphasis on productivity- and innovation-oriented investments (Wijayanto, 2019). Paul Krugman's spatial economics theory further asserts that the growth benefits of construction hinge on its integration with other local industries; if the sector is poorly linked to domestic supply chains or overly reliant on imported inputs, its positive spillovers will be muted. Therefore, infrastructure policy must prioritize sustainability, intersectoral linkages, and productivity optimization to enable the CCI to meaningfully contribute to regional growth (Elhorst, 2024).

The Human Development Index (HDI) shows a positive and significant relationship with economic growth in South Sumatra over the 2016–2023 period. This linkage is well explained by Gary Becker's human capital theory, which posits that investments in education and health enhance workforce skills and productivity, thereby spurring growth (Lestari & Bawono, 2021). Paul Romer's endogenous growth framework further highlights human capital as a key driver of innovation and technological progress, fostering sustainable economic expansion (Harris, 2007). Amartya Sen's capability approach similarly argues that improvements in education and health not only boost individual productivity but also expand economic freedoms, enabling broader participation in economic activities. Thus, raising HDI transcends welfare measurement—it constitutes a fundamental strategy for accelerating regional growth through productivity gains and innovation (Blackwell, 2015).

The number of community health centers (Puskesmas) was found to have no significant effect on economic growth in South Sumatra during 2016–2023. Contrary to findings by Praja (2023), which identify roads, hospitals, Puskesmas, and schools as growth determinants, our results suggest that health infrastructure alone does not

guarantee growth benefits. Becker and Schultz's human capital framework stresses that health investments improve labor productivity, but the lack of a significant impact here implies that facility quantity must be complemented by service quality, accessibility, and public awareness (Lestari & Bawono, 2021). Consistent with Romer's endogenous growth theory, internal factors such as human capital quality and innovation are pivotal. Bloom and Canning (2000) further demonstrate that health investments yield limited productivity gains without sufficient medical personnel and adequate facilities. Therefore, health policy must go beyond expanding infrastructure to ensure effective service delivery and utilization if it is to positively influence regional growth.

Employment levels likewise did not significantly affect economic growth in the province over the study period. Although human capital theories by Becker and Schultz link labor force investments to productivity improvements, our findings indicate that sheer employment numbers are insufficient to drive growth. Endogenous growth theory stresses the importance of human capital quality and innovation over quantity alone. Bloom and Canning (2000) also show that labor investments lacking complementary factors—such as skills development, technology adoption, and institutional support—fail to maximize productivity. Thus, labor market policies should focus on enhancing workforce quality, skills training, and innovation capacity rather than merely increasing the number of workers.

6. Conclusions

The Common Effect Model (CEM) was selected as the best-fitting model, yielding an R^2 of 0.1368. On a partial basis, only Village Fund Allocation and the Human Development Index exert significant effects on economic growth, whereas Regional Government Budget, the Construction Cost Index, the number of community health centers, and the labor force size do not show significant impacts.

The finding that the Human Development Index significantly influences economic growth in South Sumatra Province underscores the critical role of human capital quality—encompassing education, health, and purchasing power—in driving sustainable productivity and innovation. This result aligns with Human Capital theory, which posits that investments in people form the foundation for long-term economic expansion.

Conversely, Village Fund Allocation does not demonstrate a significant relationship with growth, suggesting that despite its potential to support local development, its effectiveness is highly contingent on governance quality and transparency. Misallocation of funds, corruption, and weak oversight can introduce inefficiencies that actually hamper growth. Similarly, the Regional Government Budget shows no significant effect, indicating that its current structure may lack the productivity and efficiency needed to spur private investment and optimize economic performance. Likewise, variables such as the number of health centers, the Construction Cost Index, and labor force size fail to exhibit significant influences, implying that mere

quantitative increases in infrastructure or workforce must be matched by improvements in service quality, accessibility, and utilization effectiveness to yield positive economic outcomes.

Going forward, it is imperative to investigate moderating factors—such as institutional quality, fiscal policy alignment, and community engagement—and to account for interregional differences to achieve more precise results. When administered transparently and effectively, village funds have the potential to foster local growth; likewise, prudent allocation of the regional budget can play a pivotal role in regional development. Beyond expanding physical facilities, enhancing the quality of health services is essential for bolstering workforce productivity. Ultimately, policy strategies that leverage local strengths and prioritize good governance, service quality, and innovation are expected to drive sustainable economic growth.

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