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Investigating Organizational and Human Resource Capacity of Village Government: A Case Study in Kutai Kartanegara Regency

Abstract

Indonesian Village Law No. 6/2014 mandates the village to be a self-governing community and local self-government. Based on the law, the village government conducts governmental administrative business, local development, fosters village society, and empowers local people. Organizational and human resource capacity become prerequisites to conduct the tasks. This paper aims to investigate any problems and possible solutions to strengthen village capacity in order to achieve the village's law vision. This research was conducted in Kutai Kartanegara (Kukar) Regency, Indonesia. It used a qualitative approach and the data were collected in several ways, i.e. focus group discussions, interviews, secondary data, and observations. The study showed that village governments have no authority to design their own organizations because the designs are prepared by central and local governments in detail. Moreover, the lack of competence among village government staff and financial dependency also makes village governments rely on

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supports from central and local governments. It concludes that high intervention from upper governments make the village governments have limited room to manage their organizations. Secondly, policy disharmony among ministers also makes them in a dilemma about which one should be followed. Thirdly, various limits upon villages consequently makes them highly depend on supports, especially financial supports, from higher levels of government. Therefore, some actions need to be taken, such as reducing intervention, synchronizing policies among ministries, strengthening village organization and staff, and optimizing the role of local government agencies and stakeholders to take part in the village development process.

Keywords:

The organization; human resource; village government; Kutai Kartanegara Regency

Introduction

The village government is one of the closest government units to people because it is the lowest government tier in Indonesia. In Indonesia, there are 81,626 villages and it means that there are 81,626 village governments (*Jumlah Desa*, n.d.). They have the authority to serve people and develop the village's potencies. To manage them, people in the village elect their leader as a Head of Village (*Kepala Desa*) and members of The Village Representative Board (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa / BPD*) through different general elections for a six-year term. The existence of village governments in Indonesia has been commenced since many decades ago, even before this country was declared. Unfortunately, some critical problems still remain in villages, such as poverty and basic infrastructure problems.

In the first semester (March) of 2018, there were about 25.95 million poor people totally in Indonesia. The poor people mostly live in rural or village area by 15.81 million (60.9 %). Meanwhile, 10.14 million (39.1 %) live in urban areas (BPS, n.d.). However, the poverty line indicator applied for the village is lower than in the urban area. In the first semester (March) of 2018, the village poverty line is IDR 383,908 per capita per month. Meanwhile, the urban poverty line is IDR 415,614 per capita per month (BPS, n.d.). Therefore, if a similar poverty line is applied for village and urban, the village poverty would be higher than the data presented above. In addition, World Bank sets a poverty line of USD 1.9 or IDR 28,500 a day (if USD 1 = IDR 15,000) or it is approximately IDR 855,000 a month. So, if the World Bank standard is applied, the number of poor people will be higher.

In 2014, the central government issued a Village Law No. 6 of 2014. The Village Law 2014 has a new spirit to make villages in Indonesia being entities that combine self-governing community and local self-government concepts. A village government, based on the Village Law

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2014, has four authority fields, including conducting governmental administrative business, conducting local development, fostering village societal and empowering local people. In the previous Village Law No. 32/2004, the village government only had one main authority filed, namely conducting governmental administrative business. Table 1 shows the comparison of village authority fields or tasks between the Village Law 2004 and the Village Law 2014. To support the tasks, village governments are allowed to manage local resources as their budget sources. Article 72 of the new Law mentions some available revenues including genuine own incomes, shared allocation of the national, province, and regency/municipality budgets, and other any possible grant or donation.

Table 1.
Comparison of Village Tasks between the Village Law 2004 and the Village Law 2014

The Village Law 2004 (UU No. 32 of 2004)	The Village Law 2014 (UU No. 6 of 2014)
Conducting governmental administrative business	Conducting governmental administrative business; Conducting local development; Fostering village societal; Empowering local people

Sources: UU No. 32/2004 & UU No. 6/2014

The set of given authorities and budget sources allow village governments to develop their local potencies in order to make villages well-developed. On the other hand, if the village governments cannot work out how to manage their authorities and potencies in accountable ways so they will potentially be trapped in corruptive activities. Commission of Corruption Eradication (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* / KPK) found out 14 problems in village budget management in some aspects. They include regulation and organization, business process, supervision, and human resource aspects (Putra, 2015). Furthermore, some budget misappropriation cases have occurred in some regencies. It shows that the village government has many problems and they need serious attention from the local government to foster them.

The various opportunities and problems in villages raise an urgency to strengthen village capacity in conducting its tasks. The common solution to solve this problem is usually proposing training programs for village government staff. However, village governments have a low bargaining position to make decisions and the final decision belongs to local government or regency (Asrori, 2014). Village human resources consist of at least three main actors, such as the head of village and staff, BPD, and society. Institutional and human resource

Table 2.
Comparison of Village Issue in Several Literatures

Literature Title	Similarity	Difference
Beyond Government-Led Or Community-Based: Exploring The Governance Structure And Operating Models For Reconstructing China's Hollowed Villages (Liu, Zhang, Lin, & Li, 2019)	Discussing village development with both theoretical analysis and case studies	Discussions of China's hollowed village reconstruction (HVR) program tend to divide initiatives into a community-based model (CBM, led by local actors which are also called bottom-up model) and government-led model (GLM, driven by policymakers which are also called top-down model). In this paper, we propose a theoretical framework, which goes beyond these two models. Then, we take three typical villages that experienced different models of HVR in recent years as case studies, exploring the intersection of the process of decision-making, the structure of governance and the performance of projects. Both theoretical analysis and case studies show that a hybrid governance structure (HGS), with a limited range of reconstruction in the distribution and functions of rural land, is most in line with China's background for HVR and rural vitalization. The participatory process is very important for these three modes, with villages and communities as the important carriers for participation and interaction. Not only can villagers truly participate in the planning and decision-making process in the HGS's approach, which enables villagers to have more autonomy, but also enhanced the project's performance by integrating villagers' interests and willingness with government proposals, matching the subjective and the objective conditions. This research indicates that we can integrate diverse driving forces of village revitalization, pay more attention to the governance's structure and operating models of reconstructing. More importantly, this study responds to Elinor Ostrom's common-pool resource theory and suggests a way forward in the public governance of rural vitalization in contemporary China.
Community Participation And Government Role In Using Village Funds in Dlingo Village (Arifa, 2019)	Discussing village development	This study discusses community participation and the role of the government in the utilization of village funds in Dlingo Village. The aim of this study was to find out about the level of community participation in the use of village funds in Dlingo Village and to find out about the role of the government in determining the use of village funds in Dlingo Village. This study uses Arnstein's theory of participation ladder, which is used to determine the level of community participation at each stage of development, namely planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The research method used is qualitative descriptive research method by collecting qualitative data in the form of interviews, document studies, and observations. The results of this study indicate that: (1) Community Participation in Development Program Planning is at the level of community participation at the partnership level. Community participation in the process is quite high, reaching 90% attendance at the village development planning meeting forum. (2) Community Participation in the Implementation of the Development Program is at the stage of placation, this is evidenced by the implementation of the program involving almost the entire community. The role of the village government as the manager of village funds in terms of implementing the program is as a coordinator so that each program can be implemented properly. (3) Community participation in the Development Program Monitoring and Evaluation is in the consultation stage where the community becomes a consultant to the village government. The role of the government is in the monitoring and evaluation process in terms of being a driver of supervision and evaluation among the community

Literature Title	Similarity	Difference
The Sustainability of Livelihoods of Villages Around The Tin Mine In Bangka Islands (Sulista, 2019)	Discussing village development with qualitative methods, collected data through interviews and focus group discussions on community leaders	Massive tin mining activities in Bangka Belitung Islands Province have caused a detrimental effect that reduces the livelihoods of the people living around the mining area. On the other hand, there has been a shift in livelihoods from agrarian communities to mining communities that increase anxieties on the livelihoods in the future. The purpose of this study is to obtain information about the sustainability of the switched people livelihoods which concentrated in villages around the tin mining area. The study utilized qualitative methods, collected data through interviews and focus group discussions on community leaders, village government officials, and mining actors to analyze aspects of vulnerability and household livelihood strategies based on a sustainable livelihood framework. The results of the study reveal that household groups that work with mining owners and mining tailings have the most vulnerable livelihood resources because their main source of income from tin mining activities is only able to meet their daily needs. Furthermore, the group has very limited land and social relationships that rely solely on elements of kinship and moneylender services when faced with financial difficulties. However, most of these households began to respond to the end of the post-tin economy in the pepper plantation and trade sub-sector. In addition, business opportunities in the sub-sector of livestock, horticulture, and capture fisheries for coastal villages have been utilized by mining owners as the alternative livelihoods.
Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Mengelola Alokasi Dana Desa (ADD) di Desa Tegeswetan dan Desa Jangkrikan Kecamatan Kepil Kabupaten Wonosobo (Kartika, 2012)	Discussing village development	The objective of this research is to know the community participation in managing add and identifying supporting and disinhibition factors which the community received in participating in managing adds. The research method using qualitative analytical descriptive with information on village and community head. Research results mentioned that the community of the Tegeswetan village and the credit in the citizens are initiatives to contribute to add management. Not only in planning, implementation or supervision, but more important is community awareness to involve in developing villages is a solution to advance development village.
What Makes Better Village Development In Traditional Agricultural Areas Of China? Evidence From Long-Term Observation Of Typical Villages (Li, Fan, & Liu, 2019)	Discussing village development	Although China is experiencing a rapid urbanization process, the village is still the basic socio-economic unit in rural China and could be seen as the cell of the rural system. A profound understanding of the nature of village development has important theoretical and practical values. This study aims to explore what makes better village development in traditional agricultural areas of China based on long-term observation and comparison of typical villages. The main findings suggest that rural elites are crucial actors in the transformational development of relatively successful villages. The success of these villages is based on the integration and coordination of internal and external driving forces, the participation, negotiation and cooperation among key actors, and the formation and development of rural networks with these key actors. These actors, interactions and processes could be theorized as a conceptual model for rural development: the bearing model. This study could help better understand the political ecology of rural development during the transition from urban bias to rural priority
Kapasitas Perangkat Desa Dalam Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Desa Di Kabupaten Kudus (Asrori, 2014)	Discussing village development (District Government) and village officials	To find out the capacity of village officials in organizing the village government, it can be done by mapping village officials. This research was conducted with the aim to determine the capacity of village officials in the administration of government; constraints, and steps that have been and will be taken by the Kudus District Government to increase the capacity of village officials in carrying out village governance. This research is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach in three districts of Kudus Regency, namely Dawe, Jekulo and Undaan Districts, with a sample of 26 villages.

Literature Title	Similarity	Difference
		The results of the study, among others, indicate that the level of understanding of village officials in understanding the management of human resources and the technical ability of village officials is still lacking. The majority of village officials have not yet participated in education and training / technical competency guidance, because they have a working period of more than 10 years that village officials feel they have an adequate level of knowledge
Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Desa Dalam Perspektif Desentralisasi Administratif Dan Desentralisasi Politik (Suharto, 2012)	Discussing village development, collection data and type data	This study aims to analyze the administration of village governance from the perspective of administrative and political decentralization. This research has a qualitative descriptive type. Data analysis techniques by means of content analysis techniques and phenomenological analysis techniques. Data validity tests include internal validity, external validity, reliability, objectivity. Based on the results and discussion of the research several conclusions can be formulated, including the implementation of village governance; changes in institutional structure and function in the administration of village governance; and village independence.

Sources: Liu et al. (2019), Arifa (2019), Sulista (2019), Kartika (2012), Li, Fan, & Liu (2019), Asrori (2014), and Suharto (2012).

capacities are the most important issues which influence the effectiveness to build a village as a self-governing community and local self-government. The successful work to achieve this vision arguably will support local development and create autonomous villages.

This paper discusses village government capacity in facing the implementation of the Village Law 2014 in Kutai Kartanegara (Kukar) Regency, Kalimantan Timur Province. The discussion will focus on organizational and human resource aspects of village government. Kukar Regency has 193 villages (BPS Kutai Kartanegara, 2018), and it is the highest number of villages in this province. Kukar also has a large territory and complete topography. It has forestry, urban, rural, and coastal areas. The villages are spread out in coastal or downstream, close to urban, and upstream or outback areas. The terms of downstream (*hilir*) and upstream (*hulu*) refer to areas where Mahakam River flows down through them.

In this regency, the village is one of several important issues mentioned in long-term development planning. The Long-term Regional Development Planning (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Daerah / RPJPD*) 2005-2025 of

Kukar Regency, which is stipulated through Local Regulation No. 17/2010, especially in explanation of the 3rd mission, puts village as a target in creating new economy centers and infrastructure improvement. Moreover, this research will search for alternative solutions to strengthen village capacity in order to build an autonomous or self-governance village.

To find out the originality of this research, in this case, previous research with the same theme of discussion will be included. Table 2 presents a comparison of village discussion from various literatures. While this research focuses on the organizational aspects and human resources of the village government and discussing the capacity of the village government in dealing with the implementation of the 2014 Village Law in Kukar Regency, some papers have various focuses in discussing village issue. It also shows the differences of this research from other papers.

From the results of the above studies, there are several basic points of difference with this research, namely;

1. The study in this research would like to describe in-depth about discussing the capacity of the village government in dealing

with the implementation of the 2014 Village Law in the District of Kukar;

2. This research focuses on the organizational aspects and human resources of the village government.

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We organize this paper into four sections, namely method, results and discussion, conclusion, and recommendations. In the Results and Discussion section, we organize it into three sub-sections. First, we discuss the organizational strengthening issue of the village government. Second, we present human resources strengthening in the village. And finally, we discuss the prospect of self-local governing community and local self-government.

Literature Review

Organizational Strengthening of Village Government

There are many similarities between the MOHA Regulation No. 84/2015 and the Kukar

Regent Regulation No. 7/2016. It is because the Regent Regulation No. 7/2016 refers to the MOHA Regulation and even it tends to copy the content of the MOHA Regulation 2015. The Regent Regulation is made based on article 15 of the MOHA Regulation which mandates the regency government to arrange further organizational and business process regulation on the village government. The content of the MOHA Regulation is detailed and clear, it even sets names of posts in the village government structure. It is argued that the MOHA Regulation is sufficient enough to be guided to arrange the village government structure. However, the mandate to arrange further regulation makes the regency government did it. Furthermore, as lower regulation than the minister regulation, the regent regulation needs to cascade it into technical guidance for the village government to operate the minister regulation, not only copying it.

This organizational issue was confirmed by informants in the village government. They mentioned that one of the problems in the village is overwhelmed regulation from various government agencies. The regulations from the central government do not address existing problems in villages. Every region has different natures and problems, and unfortunately, the regulations are designed for all villages together (FGD, 2016). In other words, the central government uses uniformity or a 'one size fits all' approach in fostering village governments.

"Regulations from the central government do not meet the existing condition in villages. They are applied to all regions in Indonesia, whereas each region, such as Java, Sumatera, and Kalimantan, has different nature and human resources. In making regulation, it needs to be preceded by a study, and do not apply a regulation uniformly to all villages", said a Head of Village in Marangkayu Sub-district (FGD, 2016).

In addition, KPK also found out some potential problems in managing the village budget

including some aspects, such as regulation and organizational, business process, controlling, and human resource aspects. In regulation and organizational aspect, authority overlapping occurs in fostering village governments between Directorate General of Village Governmental Foster (under the Ministry of Home Affairs) and the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (or *Kementrian Desa, Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal, dan Transmigrasi*) (Putra, 2015).

In terms of organizational aspect, the organization structure is designed based on needs to achieve the organization goal. Organizational change might happen to respond to any change in organization nature, such as environment, technology, organization function and size, culture, and so on. There are three elements in defining organization structure: (1) it shows formal report relation; (2) it identifies individual grouping in any department; and (3) it should make effective communication, coordination, and integration between departments (Daft, 2007, p. 190).

Organizational strengthening is one of the important aspects of creating an autonomous village. Authority fields that are given by the Village Law 2014 have been accommodated in the MOHA Regulation 2015 and the Kukar Regent Regulation 2016. They are described in a job description of the village government which includes four authority fields (see Table 1). The authority fields are then cascaded into the organization structure.

Figure 1 shows a general pattern of organization structure based on the MOHA Regulation No. 84/2015 that must be implemented by all village governments in Indonesia. This regulation differentiates the new organization structure pattern of the village government from the previous pattern. In the new structure, it clearly separates division or section chiefs that conduct organization main tasks from supporting tasks under Village Secretary. While the previous

structure did not have section chiefs, consequently supporting units conducted both supporting tasks and line tasks together, such as public service and administrative support.

The Regent Regulation 2016 separates two kinds of village organization structure (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), and village governments in this regency need to apply one of them based on village classification. There are three kinds of village classification in Indonesia based on village development, such as *Swasembada*, *Swakarya*, and *Swadaya* villages. *Swasembada* village is considered as the most developed village, while *Swadaya* village is the less developed village than *Swasembada* and *Swakarya* villages. And *Swakarya* village is in the middle, a developed village between two other kinds of the village. Those which are considered as *Swasembada* and *Swakarya* villages can build organization structure that has three Section Chiefs and three Units or Affairs Chief (*Kepala Urusan*) which are located under the Village Secretary (see Figure 2). However, *Swadaya* village can only build two Section Chiefs and two Affairs Chief (see Figure 3).

It is argued that such a uniformity approach in arranging village organization structure reflexes a high centralization and formalization degree over village governments in the regency and even in Indonesia. There are at least four elements of organization structure, such as span of control, centralization-decentralization, formalization, and departmentalization (McShane & Travaglione, 2007). In the centralization-decentralization element, village governments do not have an opportunity to arrange or design their structures because the structures are designed by the MOHA Regulation and the Regent Regulation. Therefore, there is no decentralization in designing organization structure, otherwise, the village government just receives it as a 'taken for granted' based on village classification.

In the formalization element, various regulations and procedures over the business

process of the village government are designed by higher levels of government. Formalization, according to Mintzberg (McShane & Travaglione, 2007, p. 452), is a degree of behavior standard in an organization through rules, procedures, formal training, and related mechanism. In the context of village government organization in Indonesia, therefore analyzing its organization structure means analyzing the central government policy that discusses village organization.

However, village governments do not have strong bargaining power to negotiate their organizational issues with higher governments. Although the existence of villages in Indonesia has a long story even before this country was founded. Almost everything is regulated and organized in the national and local laws, and therefore villagers and their leaders just take it for granted. In comparison with another country, villagers in Thailand have a higher bargaining position toward the state. The effort to control villages passed a long story through conflicts between village and state in terms of ideology, political and even physical conflict. Villagers in Northeast Thailand used conflict history as bargaining power to negotiate their relationship with the state (Promphakping, Thongyou, & Viyouth, 2017).

Village leaders and staffs arguably have much more knowledge over their nature and their needs rather than the upper-level government. It is argued that arranging general rules and norms for the village by the central government is more important rather than arranging detail and technical regulations. The village government needs to have an autonomous right to design and manage its organization as part of capacity strengthening, as Brezovšek (2014) argues that autonomous principle is freedom owned by lower units. Furthermore, the basic principles of local self-government as stated by ECLSG (The European Charter of Local Self-government) contain the organizational principle of independent local government authority (Babinova, 2011).

Finally, high intervention from upper-levels of governments, even in technical aspects, over the village government undermines spirit and vision of the Village Law 2014 to build self-governing community and local self-government entities.

While level governments intervene in the village organization in Indonesia, in some countries external donors intervene. For instance, in Senegal and Burkina Faso, two countries in Western Africa, external donors create influences to village organizations through their funding supports. The influences on village organizations might be in positive or negative effect forms (Navarra & Vallino, 2015).

Methods

This research used a qualitative approach to explore and to describe the research topic upon organizational and human resource aspects of the village government in Indonesia. It looked for capacity problems and solutions in the village government in terms of the implementation of the Village Law 2014. The conclusion was made based on the inductive method that was making a generalization based on empirical data.

In collecting data, we used several means, such as FGD, secondary data, interview, and observation. First, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was one of the interview forms to collect data (Creswell, 2014, p. 191). Some other terms are often used to refer to such a group interview, such as a focus group interview and group interview (Punch, 2014, p. 146). In this interview method, researchers took a role as facilitator or moderator, did monitoring, and recorded activities (Punch, 2014, pp. 146-147). Conducting FGDs in this research was intended to gather information about village capacity and potency. This FGD then involved village government leaders or managers, members of BPD, and village association. Second, collecting secondary data was conducted to gather information about village statistical reports, official documents, and previous research reports.

Table 3.
Research Locus

Sub-District	Village	Area (km2)	Population*)
Coastal area:	Santan Ulu	604.83	4,734
Marang Kayu	Santan Ilir	97.38	2,091
Upstream area:	Muara Kaman Ulu	339.86	3,591
Muara Kaman	Bunga Jadi	60	3,927
Close to Urban:	Teluk Dalam	40	1,654
Tenggarong Seberang	Embalut	25	2,768

Source: Village government of Santan Ulu (2016), Village government of Santan Ilir (2016), Village government of Muara Kaman Ulu (2016), Village government of Bunga Jadi (2016), Village government of Teluk Dalam (2016), Village government of Embalut (2016).

**) data in 2016*

In addition, interviews and observation were conducted to validate and to get the required additional information.

This research was conducted in Kukar Regency in 2016. Villages in Kukar Regency are spread out in 18 sub-districts (*kecamatan*) in coastal or downstream, urban, and outback or upstream areas. This research locus therefore included villages in those three topography characteristics in order to gain comprehensive data from various characteristics of village nature. Table 3 shows some information from six different villages which were picked up as research locus.

Results and Discussion

Desa Mandiri (autonomous or developed village) status in Indonesia is expected to be achieved by the Village Law 2014 through implementing a combination of a self-governing community and local self-government concepts. In the regulation aspect, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) has issued a Minister Regulation No. 84/2015 concerning Organization Structure and Business Process of Village Government. The MOHA Regulation 2015 is intended to support the organizational arrangement of autonomous villages. This regulation is then referred by local governments in this country to make local regulations. Kukar Regency issued Regent Regulation No. 7/2016 concerning Organization Structure and Business Process of

Village Government to respond to the Minister Regulation. The Regent Regulation regulates the organization structure of the Village Government based on village classification. The regulation aspect that sets village organization, according to Grindle (Damayanti, Soeaidy, & Ribawanto, 2014), needs attention in strengthening village capacity besides the human resource factor. It is because village capacity potentially influences its performance in conducting tasks. Therefore, organizational and human resource aspects become the main attention in the discussion.

Human Resource Strengthening in Village

Human resource in the village includes village government leader and staffs, members of BPD, LPM (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*), and citizens. They have strategic roles to bring their village to achieve the vision of the Village Law 2014. The village government leader and staff, therefore, should have sufficient competences to manage all resources. Since the Village Law 2014 mandates some authority fields to the village, they have more responsibilities to accomplish.

Human resources in the village governments of this research have various qualifications. They have a wide range of educational levels, from high school to university. However, technical and administrative competencies must improve among them. Competency is generally perceived as knowledge, skills, and attitude owned by

someone. McShane & Travaglione (2007, p. 37) broadly include some elements as part of competency, such as skills, knowledge, aptitudes, values, drives, and other personal characteristics that drive to high performance. Strengthening village government competencies, including village leaders and their staffs as the main actor in the village government, is one of the efforts to raise their capability in conducting their tasks.

Some other actors also influence the village development works, such as BPD, LPM, and citizens. According to an informant in the FGD (FGD, 2016), BPD is involved in some routine activities in arranging village planning and budget. However, the role of LPM in village empowering is truly poor. The lack of village empowering activities is due to poor capacity BPD and LPM members, even some of their members do not understand their job description well. Strengthening village actor capacity, therefore, is required before they foster and empower citizens. In addition, article 128 Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*) No. 43/2014 mandates the central and local governments to foster the village government to empower citizens.

Villages in Kukar Regency (in coastal, urban, and upstream areas) have various characteristics in terms of their nature and human resource aspects. The village government capacity is also different both in administrative and technical aspects. Not even all staffs have the ability to make a task or project report, and other complex jobs that require a regulation mastery. Task report or SPJ (*Surat Pertanggungjawaban*) is a task accountability report that must be prepared by every staff who has completed a particular task. While arranging annual budget planning, they usually rely upon one certain staff to make the planning document (FGD, 2016). This competency gap among staff shows that human resource capacity is one of the serious problems in the village governments that need treatment. KPK (Putra, 2015) also finds out that human resources

are one of the potential problems in budget management in the village government.

Unfortunately, a critical problem also comes from volunteers who should assist the village government and citizens. Based on the experience of PNPM Mandiri project implementation, volunteers committed to corrupt and cheated the village governments because of poor capacity among their staffs (Putra, 2015). Capacity strengthening or capacity building, therefore, needs to emphasize the village government staff and BPD members. This effort process includes developing skills, strengthening abilities, and improving business processes. This effort is expected to stimulate them to adapt to changing environments. It will enhance organizational effectiveness, but it needs a long process takes time (Kapucu, 2012).

Furthermore, village development should not fully depend on financial support both from the central and local governments. Too much subsidy makes the wrong perception of citizens that all activities are supported by the government budget. They think that everything has been planned and funded through a public budget, including the worker salary, consequently, it decreases public participation to engage in village projects or activities (FGD, 2016). It creates a dilemma for staff in village governments. They still rely on government support to run some projects, but it creates an apathetic attitude among citizens.

"We are in the coastal area might fulfill regulations by 75% or more. [On the contrary] Please imagine our colleagues in the upstream area, because of poor competence and workload, they spend money to hire someone to make a project report and village planning", said a Head of Village in Marangkayu Sub-district (FGD, 2016).

The village government is considered the lowest level of four government tiers in Indonesia such as the central government, province, regency, and village. The explanation above shows the organizational and human resource

aspect village government in Indonesia. The practice of governance at the village level might have various forms in some countries. There are many published papers that discuss village issue from different perspectives or dimensions, such as local democracy (Islam, 2015), relationship between village with other government agency (Promphakping, Thongyou, & Viyouth, 2017), external intervention toward village (Navarra & Vallino, 2015), village capacity building (Kapucu, 2012) (Asrori, 2014), and community role in village (Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi, & Guggenheim, 2004).

Table 4 shows the various dimensions of village matters from some sources. The table also shows the difference position between this paper and them.

Table 4.
Villages in Various Perspectives

Dimensions	Content
Local Democracy	Local self-government and local democracy: Local self-government has an important role in promoting and developing democracy at a local level (Islam, 2015).
Relationship with Other Government Institution	Village – state relationship: Bargaining power to negotiate with the state (Promphakping, Thongyou, & Viyouth, 2017).
External Intervention	External donors bring interventions to village organizations, and the effects might be in negative or positive forms (Navarra & Vallino, 2015)
Capacity Building	Capacity Building for Nonprofit Organizations: a capacity building is needed to enhance the organizational effectiveness of small nonprofit organizations (Kapucu, 2012). Capacity building to strengthen village government staffs through various pieces of training in order to support their tasks (Asrori, 2014)
Community role	Villagers' or community cultures affect governance arrangements in villages. (Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi, & Guggenheim, 2004)

Sources: Islam (2015), Promphakping, Thongyou, & Viyouth (2017), Navarra & Vallino (2015), Kapucu (2012), Asrori (2014), and Bebbington et al. (2004).

The Prospect of Self-governing Community and Local Self-government

The President Regulation No. 2/2015 concerning National Middle-term Planning 2015-2019 sets a target to decrease less developed villages up to 5000 villages and to increase developed villages at least 2000 villages in 2019. This target needs good policy coordination and synchronization between related ministries. However, two ministries that have relate to tasks of village affairs issued different classification of village development. The MOHA uses three classifications of villages, while the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (VDDRT) uses five classifications, including autonomous or *swasembada*, advanced or *pra-swaseembada*, developing or *Madya*, underdeveloped or *pra-Madya*, and very underdeveloped or *Pratama* villages. This classification is mentioned in the Minister of VDDRT Regulation No. 2/2016 concerning Index of Village Builds (*Indeks Desa Membangun*).

It is argued that the different village classifications demonstrate a lack of policy coordination among the ministries. This kind of coordination problem is a horizontal internal coordination (Christensen & Laegreid, 2008) between the ministries. The policy coordination problem on village issues potentially creates misunderstood and also confuses local and village governments and the people. Therefore, tackling the policy coordination problem is an urgent agenda to avoid redundant regulations upon village issues. As Peters (1998) argues that coordination problem occurs when there is a redundancy, lacunae, or incoherence among government organizations. There are some names to describe the concept of coordination, such as joined-up government, connected government, policy coherence, networked government, horizontal management, and the whole of government (Management Advisory Committee,

2004, p. 3). It is basically across boundaries working among government agencies in facing particular issues or problems (Management Advisory Committee, 2004, p. 1).

Then political support is required to create a village self-government system. In terms of local democracy practice, local self-government has an important role to promote and develop a democratic culture at the local level (Islam, 2015). China has a long experience in implementing this system since the 1980s and it faces controversial among top policymakers and the resistance from local leaders (Chen, 2005). Local self-government system at least includes three principles, such as autonomy, subsidiarity and regionalization principles (Brezovšek 2014). The principle of autonomy is freedom or independence that belong to local units. So far, village autonomy in Indonesia can be seen in the practice of local elections in which citizens directly elect their leader and members of BPD. In the leader election aspect, local autonomy has been well implemented in the villages in Indonesia.

Then the principle of subsidiarity is related to decision-making delegation to the lower level which closes to society. Although the Village Law 2014 attempts to strengthen and recognize the existence of village autonomy, however, the upper governments still intervene village governments in designing structure. Even in conducting citizen's meetings, the central government also sets it through the MOHA Regulation No. 114/2014 concerning Village Development. Whereas village people have a local tradition of gathering meetings to solve their problem. Finally, the principle of regionalism is related to the transfer of political and economic power to the local level government.

In fact, not all of the principles are implemented completely. Many rigid regulations, both from the central government and the regency, cause village governments to have limited space to manage resources and make decisions. Broader space authority to arrange technical matters

should be owned by the village government and the citizens because they have much more knowledge about their needs and problems. Villages usually have local customs and traditions therefore they have an important role in building the self-governing community (Hon, 2004). Then the upper-level governments should take roles as mentors and set general rules and norms, not the technical one.

The village autonomy in Indonesia today, including in Kukar Regency, is still far away from achieving the vision of making an autonomous village. It argued that the newest Law is an effort to control the village through a limited decentralization approach. On the contrary, the Law No. 22/1999 concerning Regional Government put village governance in more liberal conception, space for various forms of government, and it provided with larger opportunities to develop village (Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi, & Guggenheim, 2004). The Law 22/1999 was the first law concerning regional government after the New Order Regime in which the village issue was a part of the law.

In the case of the Kukar Regency, there are at least three reasons. First, in the organizational aspect, village governments do not have any independency to design their organization structures, because the structure is designed by upper governments and each village government accepts it as a 'taken for granted' based on the village classification. Second, in the financial aspect, village governments rely upon financial support, especially from village fund allocation (or *Alokasi Dana Desa* / ADD). Some villages in Kukar receive more 50% of their budgets from ADD, even some village is totally depended on the ADD. Relying on ADD not only burdens the upper government budgets, but it also leads villages into dependency. Moreover, ADD often becomes a political issue both at local and national levels, especially in political campaigns of facing general elections. Politicians often promise to

increase fund allocation for villages. Third, in the human resources aspect, village governments need empowerment before they can foster and empower their citizens, and conduct village development.

It is argued that the upper-level government efforts to build a village as the self-governing community and local self-government so far, much more focus on regulation and financial aspects. The effort to strengthen village government capacities needs to get attention in order to make the village government have the ability to conduct new tasks. BPMPD (*Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Pemerintahan Desa*) as a local government agency that is responsible for village issues should take an important role in this case. Empowerment upon village government and BPD should be done before they empower their village and the citizens. Especially for the staff, who should have some capabilities in basic, management, and technical aspects. The basic capability for village government staffs is related to knowledge on regulation, village governmental, and job description. Then the management aspect is the ability to manage village human resources, assets, and finance. Moreover, the technical aspect is the skill to conduct village administration matter, arranging village regulation, and conducting public service.

In addition, village creativity to respond to problems should be grown. Many villages have their own ways to solve their problems, therefore benchmarking is an alternative way to learn from different villages. For instance, Jabiren Village in Pulang Pisau Regency, Blang Krueng Village in Aceh Besar Regency, Dermaji Village in Banyumas Regency, Mengwi Village in Badung Regency, Lalang Sembawa Village in Banyuasin Regency, Kanonang Dua Village in Minahasa Regency, and Nita Village in Sikka Regency. They have excellent achievements in various fields, such as environment, education, technology, economic empowerment, health, innovation, and budget transparency (Tempo, 2016).

Villages in Kukar Regency which have various natural characteristics are challenged to respond to their problems. It is an important question to ask why some other villages above have good achievements in different fields while the villages in Kukar do not. The aforementioned example of some best practices might be the references in how they face problems and then create breakthroughs. Village creativity and innovation might be important points that they need to have. The ability to produce new ideas and then implement them arguably becomes an alternative way to tackle their problems. Some researchers argue that there is an indirect relationship between leadership and employee behavior in public organizations (Ritz, Giauque, Varone, & Biget, 2014). It is argued that good leadership might lead to creativity and breakthrough in villages. Because a village leader is directly elected by villagers and the elected figure gain supports from most people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the poor capacity of village governments in Kutai Kartanegara is a critical problem to build an autonomous or developed village. In the organizational aspect, the village governments do not have any freedom to design and create their organizational structures based on their needs. Because the organization design has been prepared generally by the central government through the MOHA regulation. Meanwhile, in the human resources aspect, the poor capacity of some village government staff makes them rely on an assist from others. It might undermine village government performances in conducting village development and public services.

The challenges in building autonomous villages in Kutai Kartanegara and also in Indonesia come from the upper governments and the villages themselves. As a unitary system, Indonesia has an orderly law hierarchy in which higher regulations from the central government must be followed by

all local governments in the country. There are two important challenges that we identified. First, the high intervene from the upper governments through rigid regulations makes the villages have limited room to arrange and manage their organizations. Moreover, policy disharmony among ministers in the central government level puts villages in a difficult position about which one should be followed. Second, various limited upon the villages consequently make them highly dependent on external supports, especially financial support, from higher levels of governments through various programs.

Based on the discussion above, this research recommends four points to improve the village government capacity. First, reducing intervention in designing village organizations from the central and local governments toward the village governments through policy revision. The higher regulations need to set general rules and norms, instead of technical matter. It intends to make the village governments have the freedom to manage themselves based on their needs and natures. Second, policy synchronization on village matters between two ministries, namely the MOHA and the Ministry of VDDRT, for example in naming village classification and other policies. Therefore, policy coordination between related ministries and agencies is an urgent agenda to synchronize the policies. Third, strengthening the managerial and technical competencies of village government staff and organizational aspects of the village government. In the human resource competence aspect, it needs to foster village leaders and staff in their managerial and technical aspects, such as making annual and project plans, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and writing report. While in the organizational aspect, it needs to complete required apparatuses, such as job description, standard operating procedure, service standard and so on. And finally, optimizing the role of stakeholders to contribute to village development and community empowerment.

Due to focusing on organizational and human resource aspects only, this research might have some limitations. Firstly, it cannot present a comprehensive description of village problems because the discussion emphasizes on village government. And secondly, it might lack villager role discussion, because the research process did not involve village people as informants or respondents. Therefore, further research that involves villagers is needed to conduct in order to gain a wider perspective in making the village a self-governing community and local self-government.

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