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THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATION ON FARMER GROUP PERFORMANCE IN SUNGAI KAKAP DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

A farmer group functions as a platform for local farmers to collaborate, learn, and support each other in agricultural activities. Active participation of farmer group members in various group activities not only strengthens solidarity but also has the potential to improve the group's performance. This study explores the influence of farmer group member participation on group performance in Sungai Kakap District, focusing on Parit Keladi Village. The study population consists of 569 farmers. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula, resulting in 123 respondents selected through a multistage sampling technique. The analytical method used is SEM-PLS. This study is distinctive for its comprehensive application of Cohen and Uphoff's four-dimensional participation framework to Indonesian farmer groups through the SEM-PLS approach, a method rarely employed in this field. The results show that participation in decision-making, implementation, and benefit utilization significantly enhances group performance, while participation in evaluation has no notable effect. This uneven influence across dimensions extends Cohen and Uphoff's theory by demonstrating that participation is not a uniform process; instead, certain stages contribute more substantially to institutional effectiveness within the Indonesian farmer group context. The findings thus refine the theoretical understanding of participatory dynamics and provide practical insights for strengthening collaboration, improving performance, and promoting the sustainability of farmer groups.

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INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector plays a crucial role in efforts to improve community welfare, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population depends on the agricultural sector. Farmer groups as a forum for collaboration and learning have

the potential to improve group performance through the active participation of its members (Ali et al., 2021). Participation is an active process that involves individuals or groups in decision-making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of an activity, which is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Mardikanto, 2009). Participation is not only defined as physical presence but also as the contribution of ideas, labor, and responsibility toward achieving common goals (Pretty, 1995).

Effective participation creates a sense of ownership and enhances group solidarity, which ultimately has a positive impact on farmer group performance (Jatnika et al., 2024). Meanwhile, performance is the result of a job that meets certain predetermined standards (Mathis & Jackson, 2006). In the context of farmer groups, performance does not solely encompass agricultural yield productivity but also includes effectiveness in planning, managerial capability, and the group's success in managing its resources (Kholik & Chaerudin, 2025; Kurdi et al., 2023). Thus, high participation strengthens coordination, streamlines communication, and reinforces trust among members, all of which contribute to improving farmer group performance (Handayani et al., 2025).

However, research findings by Madjid et al., (2023) show that although there are many farmer groups formed, they are struggling to achieve their full capacity. The gap between the ideal conditions and the realities in the field presents a major challenge in efforts to strengthen agricultural institutions. Capacity building for farmer groups has so far been pursued through guidance and assistance provided by agricultural extension officers. One of the ongoing efforts includes the implementation of farmer group capabislity classification assessments to monitor group development. Although farmer groups are in the high capability class, the evaluation results show that the performance score achieved is still low (Pertanian, 2018). This condition suggests that the administrative classification does not fully reflect the effectiveness of institutional functions in real-world conditions.

To address these issues, strengthening institutional capacity becomes a strategic step in optimizing the role of farmer groups. The role of the group will increase when it is able to cultivate internal strength to mobilize its members toward achieving common goals, enabling farmer groups to develop into more dynamic organizations (Hardiyanto, 2024). The success of group empowerment efforts can only be achieved through a participatory approach that involves all members, considering that farmer participation and local wisdom significantly influence the roles, functions, and performance of agricultural institutions (Elizabeth, 2019). Essentially, strengthening the institutional capacity of farmer groups cannot be separated from the processes of group development and guidance, which are aimed at enhancing the group's capabilities through management and leadership approaches (Permentan, 2016).

These efforts are carried out so that farmer groups can optimally perform their functions as learning forums, cooperation platforms, and production units. To ensure that the strengthening of farmer group capacity aligns with the expected direction of institutional development, agricultural extension officers conduct capability class assessments. This assessment categorizes farmer groups into four levels: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and primary (Arieyanti & Wahyudi, 2023). The capacity represented within each category reflects the extent to which farmer groups are able to carry out their institutional functions, including serving as effective learning

forums, cooperation platforms, and production units. The higher the class of a farmer group, the better its expected quality in performing institutional functions and developing its members' farming enterprises (Margolang, 2018).

Sungai Kakap District is one of the regions with significant agricultural potential, where farming activities encompass various commodities, including food crops such as rice, horticultural products like green onions, and plantation crops such as coconut. Farmer groups serve as a platform for members to share knowledge, information, and experiences related to agricultural practices. Additionally, farmer groups play a crucial role in facilitating access to government support, including agricultural extension services, financial assistance, production inputs, and capacity-building programs. These forms of support contribute to enhancing the success and sustainability of farmers' agricultural enterprises.

Based on the 2020 data on the Farmer Group Capability Classification in Sungai Kakap District, the majority of farmer groups in this area are classified as advanced, with 216 out of a total of 358 farmer groups falling into this category. This classification indicates that these farmer groups have achieved a higher level of independence compared to beginner-level groups. However, they still require strengthening in certain aspects before advancing to the intermediate or main category. According to the 2018 Guidelines for Assessing Farmer Group Capability Levels, an increase in classification should reflect that the farmer group is functioning effectively in supporting its members to enhance farm productivity and improve their well-being. Advanced-level farmer groups are expected to operate optimally, particularly in planning, implementing, and evaluating agricultural activities.

Sungai Kakap Subdistrict consists of a number of villages with diverse agricultural characteristics. Some villages remain active in rice cultivation, while others have shifted to horticulture and plantation commodities. Among these villages, the pre-survey results indicate that Parit Keladi Village presents an interesting condition for further study. Parit Keladi Village was once known as the Rice Granary of Kubu Raya Regency, but over time, it has begun to lose that identity, accompanied by a trend of declining rice production in the village.

Table 1 Rice Production (Ton/Ha) in Parit Keladi Village (2017-2023)

Rice Types	Year						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gadu	574	505	300	407	497	0	100
Rendengan	575	415	415	500	255	310	

Source: BPP, Sungai Kakap District (2017-2023)

Table 1 shows the decline in gadu rice production from 2017 to 2019 and rendengan rice production from 2020 to 2023. This decline is triggered by several phenomena, such as a decrease in farmers' motivation to grow rice, a shift in business focus toward more profitable horticultural commodities, and weak coordination among farmer group members. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Rahmawati et al. (2021), who found that the commodity shift from rice to corn was influenced by low rice production yields, which directly impacted the decrease in farmers' income. A similar condition is also evident in Parit Keladi Village, where the ineffectiveness of the farmer group institution is reflected in the lack of consensus on rice planting and seeding schedules, causing farmers to work individually without

group synergy. Consequently, the unsynchronized planting pattern increases the risk of pest attacks, such as rats and birds, thus reducing harvest yields and worsening production conditions. The low selling price of rice also makes farmers reluctant to plant on a large scale because the profits earned are not commensurate with the production costs incurred.

This condition indicates that the decline in farmers' motivation and participation is not merely an individual issue but also reflects the weakening institutional function of farmer groups as a platform for coordination and empowerment. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Huber et al., (2025), which emphasizes that farmers' participation in collective activities is strongly influenced by economic factors and the relevance of group programs to their farming practices. When group activities no longer provide tangible economic benefits, members' participation tends to decrease, leading to reduced effectiveness and overall group performance. Although farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village are administratively classified as advanced, in practice, various challenges remain in the implementation of group activities, which may hinder the sustainability of their function as farmer organizations.

Given the challenging conditions in Parit Keladi, this study aims to thoroughly investigate how the level of member participation influences the overall performance of farmer groups. This research is crucial because it is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the functional effectiveness of these groups. The findings will serve as a vital basis for developing institutional capacity-building strategies that are more adaptive to the farmers' shifting business priorities and socio-economic dynamics. In line with the findings of (Fangohoi et al., 2023; Latif et al., 2020)This study, which emphasizes the strategic role of participation in the success of rural development, aims to determine the performance level of farmer groups and to analyze the influence of member participation on that performance. This focus is essential to strengthen institutional effectiveness and enhance the performance of farmer groups as key drivers of agricultural development at the local level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Parit Keladi Village, Sungai Kakap Subdistrict, Kubu Raya Regency, within a period of 3 months, starting from October to December 2024. This study's population consisted all farmers who are members of 31 farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village, with a total population of 569 people. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 0.08, resulting in 123 respondents. This number also fulfills the minimum requirement for SEM-PLS analysis. According to Ferdinand, (2014) The minimum sample size for SEM-PLS should be five times the number of indicators used. Since this research employed 15 indicators, the minimum required sample is 75 respondents. Therefore, the sample of 123 participants is considered adequate for model estimation.

Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with farmer group members as primary data, along with secondary data obtained from the Kubu Raya Food Security, Horticulture, and Agriculture Office and the Sungai Kakap District Agricultural Extension Office (BPP). The data were analyzed using SEM-PLS because it is a component-based or variance-based approach used to test the influence between constructs and predict causal relationships. SEM-PLS enables the analysis

of latent variables measured by multiple indicators, providing a more accurate assessment of complex constructs. Moreover, it not only identifies the magnitude of influence between variables but also provides individual indicator loadings, allowing the identification of which indicators contribute most strongly to each construct (Ferdinand, 2014; Hair et al., 2021).

To ensure the quality of measurement, validity, and reliability tests were performed by assessing indicator loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and composite reliability values according to the SEM-PLS measurement model evaluation criteria (Chin, 1998; Ferdinand, 2014). Convergent validity was confirmed if loading factors exceeded 0.7 and AVE values were greater than 0.5, while discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The variables consisted of independent variables (participation) and dependent variables (farmer group performance).

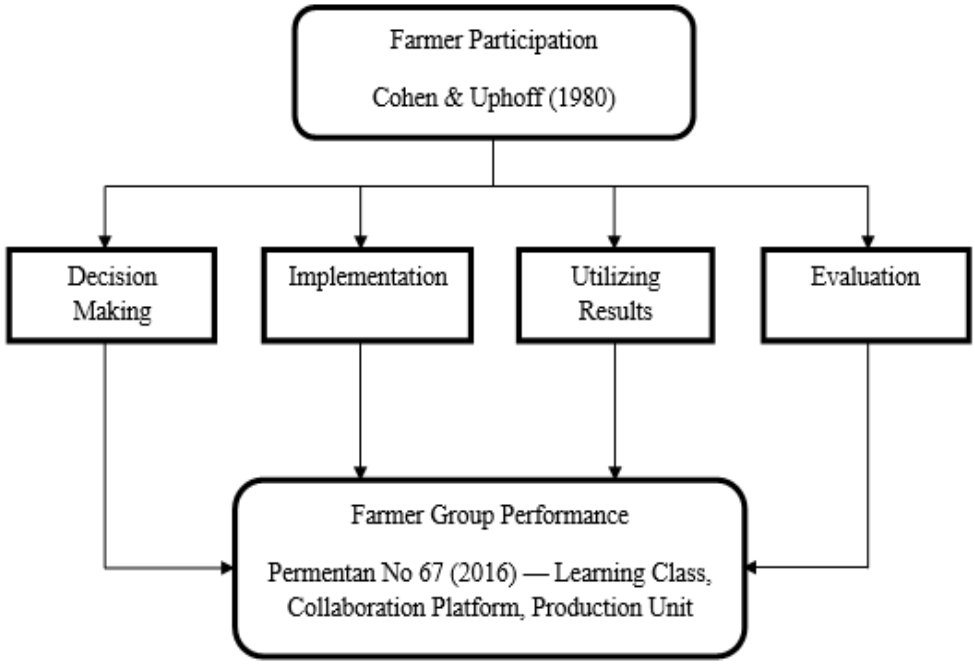

Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework

Participation is measured based on the concept of Cohen & Uphoff (1980) which includes participation in (1) decision-making, encompassing idea generation and implementation planning; (2) implementation, involving resource allocation and technical monitoring; (3) utilizing results, ensuring that members receive material, social, and personal benefits; and (4) evaluation, which focuses on providing feedback for continuous improvement. Farmer group performance, on the other hand, was assessed based on three core functions as outlined in the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 67 of 2016, namely: (1) learning class, which enhances farmers' knowledge and skills; (2) collaboration platform, which strengthens both internal and external collaboration; and (3) production unit, which seeks to achieve economies of scale through collective effort.

Optimal farmer group performance is the accumulation of active and constructive member contributions across all activity stages. Involvement in decision-making and implementation ensures strategic integration and efficiency within the production unit, while participation in utilizing results serves as an incentive that strengthens the collaboration platform and sustainability. Furthermore, participation in evaluation provides a crucial feedback mechanism that continuously sharpens the learning class and production unit functions. This framework provides the theoretical basis for testing the causal pathways between the dimensions of participation and group performance outcomes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model Analysis

Outer model testing establishes the nature of the link between each indicator and the latent variable it represents. There are three criteria for evaluating the outer model, namely Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity and Average Variance Extracted, Construct Reliability, which is measured using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (Rahadi, 2023). An explanation of each criterion will be provided as follows.

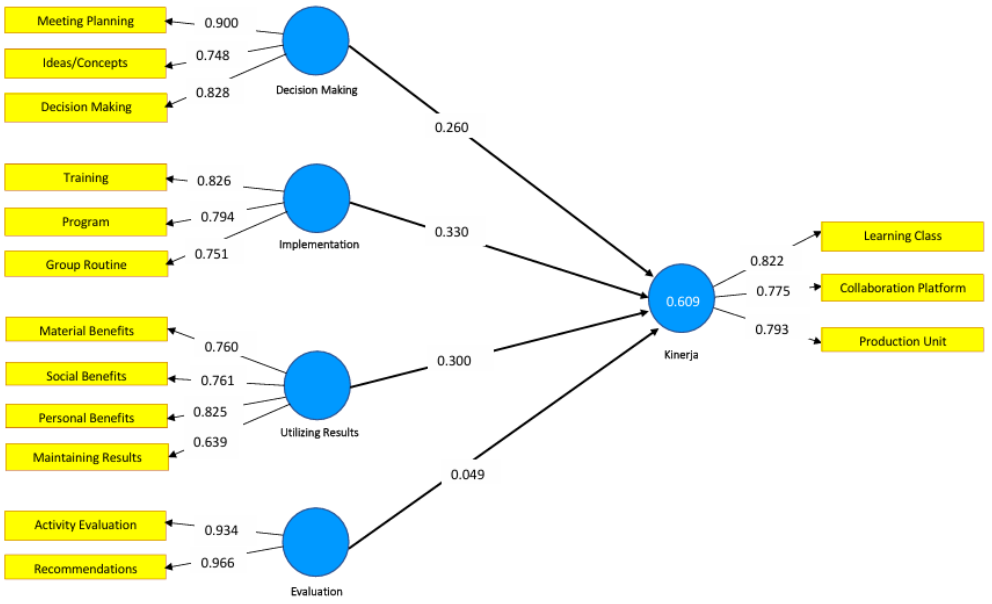

Figure 2.
Measurement Model

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity testing is seen based on outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators can be said to meet the convergent validity test if the outer loading value is > 0.70 and AVE > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2021). Meanwhile, according to Chin (1998) The outer loading value between 0.5 and 0.6 is considered sufficient for convergent validity requirements.

Table 2. Outer Loading and AVE Value

Variable	Item	Outer Loading	AVE
Participation in Decision Making (X1)	Meeting Planning	0.900	0.635
	Ideas/Concepts	0.748	
	Decision Making	0.828	
Participation in Implementation (X2)	Group Routine	0.751	0.903
	Training	0.826	
	Program	0.794	
Participation in Utilizing Results (X3)	Material Benefits	0.760	0.625
	Social Benefits	0.761	
	Personal Benefits	0.825	
	Maintaining Results	0.639	
Participation in Evaluation (X4)	Activity Evaluation	0.934	0.562
	Recommendations	0.966	
Performance (Y)	Learning Class	0.822	0.684
	Collaboration Platform	0.775	
	Production Unit	0.793	

Based on Table 2, the outer loading value and AVE value of all variables is greater than 0.5. These values indicate that all constructs have good convergent validity so that the variable items are declared valid to measure their respective constructs.

Discriminant Validity

The purpose of discriminant validity testing is to confirm the independence of the constructs within the research. It is satisfied when the value of a construct is shown to be higher than that of other differing constructs. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to test discriminant validity, and the results show that the overall AVE values exceed the inter-construct correlations. This finding confirms that all variables possess strong discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Value

	Performance	Participation in Decision Making	Participation in Implementation	Participation in Utilizing Results	Participation in Evaluation
Performance	**0.797**				
Participation in Decision Making	0.277	**0.950**			
Participation in Implementation	0.698	0.256	**0.791**		
Participation in Utilizing Results	0.680	0.260	0.696	**0.749**	
Participation in Evaluation	0.617	0.251	0.564	0.530	**0.827**

Reliability

Assessment of reliability was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Cronbach's Alpha serves to measure the minimum reliability of a construct, while Composite Reliability provides a measure of the true reliability. According to Hair et al., (2021), the CR value is said to be reliable if> 0.7 and the Cronbach's alpha value > 0.6.

Table 4. Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reability	Description
Performance	0.713	0.839	Reliable
Participation in Decision Making	0.895	0.949	Reliable
Participation in Implementation	0.703	0.833	Reliable
Participation in Utilizing Results	0.740	0.836	Reliable
Participation in Evaluation	0.767	0.866	Reliable

The results of the reliability test of the participation and performance variables obtained a reliability value of > 0.70 each. This value proves that each variable meets the reliability testing category so that it can be concluded that all variables have high reliability and the question items in the questionnaire are reliable.

Inner Model Analysis

Inner model analysis aims to predict the relationship between latent variables (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). In evaluating the inner model or structural model, the R-Square test and Hypothesis Test are carried out. Hypothesis testing by looking at the value in the Path Coefficients output (Mean, STDEV, P-Values, T-Statistics).

Table 5. R-Square Test Result Value

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Category
Y= Performance	0.609	0.595	Medium

The R-Square test shows how much the value of the independent variable affects the dependent variable. The R-Square test criteria according to Hair et al., (2021) are for an R-Square value of 0.25 = weak, 0.50 = moderate/medium, 0.75 = strong. Based on Table 5, it shows the R-Square value of 0.595. A moderate level was observed, implying that the independent variables in the model can explain 59% of the changes in the performance variabel. The remaining 41% is another factor outside the research model that also affects performance but is not measured in this study.

Table 6. F-Square Test Result Value

	F-square
Participation in Decision Making on Performance	0.110
Participation in Implementation on Performance	0.112
Participation in Utilizing Results on Performance	0.128
Participation in Evaluation on Performance	0.006

The F-square test uses the criteria according to Chin (1998) the effect is said to be small if it has an F-square value of 0.02, a medium category of 0.15, and a value of 0.35 is in the large category. Based on Table 6, show three variables in the medium category, namely decision making, implementation, and utilization of results and one variable in the small category, namely evaluation. The medium category means that participation has a significant influence on the performance of farmer groups. While the small category means that the involvement of members in the evaluation stage has very little influence on the performance of farmer groups.

Table 7. Q-Square Test Result Value

	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Performance	369,000	233,540	0.367
Participation in Decision Making	246,000	246,000	0.000
Participation in Implementation	369,000	369,000	0.000
Participation in Utilizing Results	492,000	492,000	0.000
Participation in Evaluation	369,000	369,000	0.000

The Q-square (Q^2) value test uses the criteria according to Chin, (1998) that the model can be said to have good predictive relevance if the Q-square (Q^2) value> 0. Conversely, the model can be said to lack good predictive relevance if the Q-square (Q^2) value < 0. Based on Table 7, it shows that the structural model in this study on performance produces a Q-square (Q^2) of 0.367 or can be said to be greater than zero.

Therefore, the model has predictive relevance, as the variables in the model are able to well explain the data.

Hypothesis Testing

The next stage is hypothesis testing which is seen based on the path coefficient value and the resulting t-statistic value. According to Ghozali & Latan, (2015) the hypothesis is declared accepted if the t-statistic value is> 1.96 and the P-Value (<0.05). Hypothesis testing is done by bootstrapping, the results of which are as shown in the following table.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	Path Coefficients	T Statistic	P Values	Conclusion	Decision
Participation in Decision Making → Performance	0.049	3.158	0.002	Positively significant	Accepted
Participation in Implementation → Performance	0.330	3.533	0.000	Positively significant	Accepted
Participation in Utilizing Results → Performance	0.300	3.745	0.000	Positively significant	Accepted
Participation in Evaluation→ Performance	0.260	0.789	0.430	Positively insignificant	Rejected

The Influence of Participation in Decision-Making on Performance

Based on Table 8, it is significantly evident that active participation of farmer group members in the decision-making process has a positive correlation to improved group performance. This finding is supported by the t-statistic value (3.158>1.96) and the p-value (0.002<0.05). This value indicates that the higher the level of member participation in decision-making, the higher the performance of the farmer group. This suggests that member involvement in determining the direction, planning, and strategy of the group plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall effectiveness of farmer organizations.

This results is consistent with Arnstein (1969) view that high participation is characterized by a division of rights, responsibilities and authority between the community and the government in decision-making. The farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village provide a concrete example of such participatory practices. These groups are authorized to hold regular meetings that provide space for all members to engage in decision-making processes. The meetings are conducted openly, allowing equal opportunities for members and leaders to express opinions and reach a collective consensus. The frequency of meetings varies according to the specific needs of each group, as suggested by Muslimah, (2021) who argued that the intensity of meetings should be adjusted to group dynamics to ensure effective decision-making.

For example, rice farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village usually hold meetings twice a year, particularly at the beginning of the planting season. These meetings mainly focus on planning synchronized seedling schedules and organizing collective rat eradication activities as part of integrated pest management efforts. In contrast, most horticultural farmer groups tend to hold meetings only at certain times, such as when government assistance or project support is distributed. These meetings generally serve as information-sharing sessions led by the group leader regarding aid distribution and related procedures. Although the frequency and purpose of meetings differ between groups, both serve as participatory platforms for decision-making, idea exchange, and consensus building among members.

Interview findings revealed diverse patterns of participation among farmer group members in Parit Keladi Village. While many members tend to follow the flow of discussion without expressing personal opinions, some actively contribute ideas and suggestions. The most active participants are typically the group leaders or committee members who bear greater responsibility for managing activities. Active participation in the decision-making process not only results in more democratic and inclusive decisions that reflect members' needs but also fosters solidarity and a sense of belonging among them (Rahmatullah et al., 2024). High attendance rates in meetings also demonstrate the members' strong commitment to the group's sustainability and the achievement of shared goals.

Participation in decision-making has a direct and measurable influence on farmer group performance. Active involvement of all members contributes to more democratic discussions and generates decisions that accommodate the aspirations of all participants (Pakpahan et al., 2023). These consensus-based decisions form the foundation for efficient group operations, including activity planning, resource allocation, and strategic development. Therefore, the higher the level of member participation in decision-making, the better the performance of the farmer group in achieving its collective objectives effectively and sustainably.

The Influence of Participation in Implementation on Performance

The effect of participation in implementation on performance is shown in Table 8, where the results show a t-statistic value of (3.558>1.96) and the resulting p-value of (0.000<0.05). This data indicates a significant influence between participation in implementation and the performance of farmer groups. This is in line with research conducted by (Andri et al., 2022; Aulia et al., 2022) where the results showed that if farmer participation increases, it will also have an impact on increasing farm productivity. Farm productivity reflects the success of farmer groups in managing resources, utilizing technology, and implementing more effective and efficient agricultural practices.

Participation in implementation among farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village can be observed through both internal and external group activities. Internal activities in rice farmer groups such as seed dropping, exterminating rat pests together, and mobile harvesting, reflect the spirit of togetherness and mutual assistance between members. Meanwhile participation within horticultural farmer groups tends to be more limited, such as environmental clean-up activities held monthly by several groups. These activities will increase cooperation between

members so that when participation in the implementation of activities is high, it can also affect the performance of farmer groups as a vehicle for cooperation.

External activities include rice seed production training organized by BIMTEK, the Department of Agriculture, and other agricultural institutions. In addition, training on fertilizer and pesticide production is often facilitated by universities such as Tanjungpura University and Panca Bakti University. Some members have also participated in agricultural machinery training, such as the operation of rice transplanters. These training programs have positively contributed to improving farmers' knowledge, technical skills, and competencies. Consequently, farmer groups serve as effective learning classes that facilitate the continuous capacity development of their members.

Then participation in the implementation of farmer group members is also seen in programs that support the progress of farmer groups. According to Untari et al., (2022) the stronger the beliefs and perceptions of group members towards a program, the greater the level of involvement of each individual in its implementation. Programs such as the planting of superior rice seeds, food security programs, and the promotion of chili peppers provide opportunities for farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village to try new agricultural practices based on innovation. These programs are often complemented by the application of technology, the use of new materials, and the introduction of modern methods, which are in line with the function of farmer groups as production units.

These findings are consistent with Rogers, (2003) which emphasizes that the adoption of innovation occurs through communication and social interaction within a social system. In this context, farmer groups function as diffusion agents that accelerate the dissemination of agricultural innovations at the grassroots level. When members actively participate in implementation activities, they do not merely act as beneficiaries but also become agents of change who spread new agricultural practices among other members. In conclusion, the higher level of member participation in implementation, both through internal and external activities, the performance of farmer groups will increase.

The Influence of Participation in Utilizing Results on Performance

Participation in the utilization of results relates to the benefits obtained by group members after joining the farmer group (Fangohoi et al., 2023). These benefits include personal, social, and material aspects such as improved skills, social relations and economic benefits. After receiving these benefits, farmer group members also contribute in maintaining and preserving the benefits that have been obtained so that their sustainability is maintained. Based on Table 8, the t-statistic value is (3.745>1.96) and the resulting p-value is (0.000<0.05). This value indicates that there is an influence between participation in the utilization of results and the performance of farmer groups. The higher the benefits received by farmer group members, the higher the motivation and participation of members in supporting farmer group activities.

The benefits received by farmer group members, whether in the form of resource assistance, network expansion, or increased insight, contribute directly to improving farmer group performance. Easy access to resources increases production efficiency and yields, while new networks and information encourage farmer group

members to adopt agricultural technologies and innovations. In addition, the active involvement of members in the maintenance of results such as maintenance costs for equipment rental supports the performance of farmer groups as a vehicle for cooperation and production units. This is in line with research conducted by Dwijosusilo & Shafiyah (2020) which shows that people with high enthusiasm will participate in maintaining and maintaining shared results by carrying out repair or maintenance actions. When farmer group members feel ownership of the group's work, they are more motivated to actively participate in maintenance activities. This creates a positive cycle where high participation improves group performance, which in turn strengthens the sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

The Influence of Participation in Evaluation on Performance

Participation in evaluation relates to the involvement of farmer group members in measuring the success of previously planned and implemented activities. Based on Table 8, there is no significant relationship between the level of member participation in evaluation and farmer group performance. The t-statistic was below the critical threshold, and the p-value exceeded the predetermined significance level. This indicates that participation in evaluation has not significantly influenced the performance of farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village.

Although evaluation is an important aspect of sustainability and performance improvement, the reality in the field shows that member participation in this process is still less than optimal. This finding is in line with research conducted by Safitri et al., (2022) which revealed that member participation was not dominant at the evaluation stage. Research by Khasanah et al., (2024) also shows that participation in monitoring and evaluation is low, due to a lack of direct involvement from all members. In the context of farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village, low participation in evaluation is mainly due to the lack of initiative from group leaders to organize reflective meetings after activities are completed. For instance, following the *joint harvesting* activities, groups rarely conduct comprehensive evaluations regarding achievement levels, encountered constraints, or the overall effectiveness of the program. Reflection and learning processes are typically left to individual members, without any formal forum that facilitates experience sharing or the formulation of improvement strategies.

This condition indicates that a reflective and evaluative culture has not yet been firmly embedded within the institutional system of farmer groups. Most members tend to perceive success merely through visible outcomes, such as the amount of harvest, without considering the efficiency of implementation processes. Moreover, evaluation activities are often perceived as administrative routines that do not directly contribute to productivity improvement. From a participatory perspective, this suggests that a sense of ownership over group management processes has not been fully established, as the evaluation stage requires analytical and managerial skills that not all members possess.

In addition to internal factors, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within farmer group institutions further limit member involvement. Only a small number of groups conduct evaluations involving agricultural extension officers, even though Alfatih et al., (2024) emphasize that extension officers play an essential role as organizers who can encourage farmers' participation and facilitate group

reflection and learning. However, this role has not been optimally utilized in most farmer groups in Parit Keladi Village. Consequently, limited participation in evaluation reduces opportunities to identify weaknesses, develop effective solutions, and improve overall group performance. Therefore, the lack of active participation in evaluation remains one of the key factors hindering the optimization of farmer group performance in Parit Keladi Village.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that active farmer participation in decision-making, implementation, and utilization of results is a major driver of improved farmer group performance in the Sungai Kakap sub-district. However, the analysis (using SEM-PLS) revealed a surprising gap. Participation in the evaluation stage had no significant impact, underscoring a critical need to strengthen member involvement in assessing outcomes. To address this, collaboration must be intensified among agronomists, farmer groups, and government agencies, focusing on reinforcing cooperative efficiency and securing rice production. Practical recommendations include establishing consistent technical guidance for all cooperatives, streamlining administrative procedures for aid, and ensuring that agricultural offices develop and monitor participatory evaluation frameworks that encourage peer-to-peer learning. Looking ahead, future research should use qualitative methods to explore the behavioral and cultural factors influencing evaluation involvement and incorporate mediating variables (like leadership and motivation) to build a more dynamic model of group success.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Authors contributed to this study as follows: [Author 1] was responsible for designing the research, collecting data, conducting data analysis, and writing the original draft of the manuscript. [Author 2] provided research supervision, involved the conceptualization, contributed to the development of the research methodology and review of the manuscript. [Author 3] was involved in the conceptualization of the research and contributed to the review and refinement of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the article.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

Authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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ETHIC STATEMENT

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study as it did not involve any intervention and posed minimal risk to participants. Nevertheless, informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation, and all data were anonymized and kept confidential.

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