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Does Household Financial Management of Independent Oil Palm Smallholders Promote Rural Development?

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable production by independent oil palm smallholders links to the creation of goods and services using processes and systems that are resource-conserving, economically viable, and socially and creatively rewarding for all working people and consumers. However, there is limited efficiency in financial management and low resource allocation for rural finance operations to support the development of rural economies. This study tried to prove whether household financial management promotes rural development using the theories of transaction cost, financial transaction management, public expenditure management, and a rural development framework. This research was conducted in Sambas District, West Kalimantan, using a mixed method with purposive sampling and structured questionnaires administered to 200 independent oil palm smallholders. Multidimensional scaling and a structural equation model were employed to analyze the data. The results unveiled that household financial management promoted rural development due to its effects on accessibility and infrastructure for market opportunities, basic and public services, and governance regarding participation in agriculture meetings and training by the government. Governance emerged as the most direct effect of rural development as it contributed to livelihoods, community-based economic empowerment, human resources, and rural environmental problems. Operational and risk management came as the most influential factors in household financial management. Government played a role in engaging smallholders in supply chains, access to inputs, and households' transition in confronting a variety of yields, unstable output and input prices, and changes in production technology. Innovative multi-actor collaborations were required to reinforce and provide a cloak for policy decisions.

Keywords: Economic empowerment; Financial management; Market opportunity; Oil palm smallholders; Rural development

INTRODUCTION

Independent oil palm smallholders are one of the keys to achieving sustainable production (Bakhtary, Haupt, Luttrell, Landholm, & Jelsma, 2021) and initiating the regional

economy (Sukiyono et al., 2022). In 2020, the total area of oil palm smallholders in Indonesia was 6.09 (40.62%) of 14,97 million hectares and produced 17,38 (35.38%) of 49,12 million tonnes of total crude palm oil production (Nashr, Putri, Dharmawan, & Fauzi, 2021). Independent oil palm smallholders have been believed to enhance livelihood standards (Chiriacò, Bellotta, Jusić, & Perugini, 2022), poverty alleviation (Ichsan, Saputra, & Permatasari, 2021; Ruml et al., 2022), and human capital formation among farm households in rural areas(Chrisendo, Siregar, & Qaim, 2022; Qaim, Sibhatu, Siregar, & Grass, 2020; Sukiyono et al., 2022).

However, independent oil palm smallholders have faced multiple socioeconomic challenges, such as low-intensity farming, low yields, limited market access, and insufficient profits (Ogahara, Jespersen, Theilade, & Nielsen, 2022), which prevent modernizationz (Meemken & Bellemare, 2020). They are often associated with unsustainable oil palm sources (Nashr et al., 2021), such as tropical deforestation, losses in biodiversity and ecosystem functions (Qaim et al., 2020), land conflicts, and labor abuses (Ogahara et al., 2022).

In addition, they possess variations in financial management (Andrianto, Fauzi, & Falatehan, 2019) and low technical efficiency (Varina, Hartoyo, Kusnadi, & Rifin, 2021). Most independent smallholders do not record cash flows; only a few keep written records of the prices of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) or the quantity of fertilizers and pesticides (Sahara, Haryadi, & Kusumowardhani, 2017), have a low marginal propensity to save, and prefer to hold cash (Sahara et al., 2017). Accordingly, they bear all kinds of business risks from markets due to limited capital (Ichsan et al., 2021), disconnects, and antagonisms in the global oil palm sector (Pacheco, Schoneveld, Dermawan, Komarudin, & Djama, 2020).

Thus, independent oil palm smallholders highly necessitate financial literacy to manage their financial resource needs (Askar, Ouattara, & Zhang, 2020). It has been widely recognized to affect people's welfare and the quality of household decisions (Koomson, Ansong, Okumu, & Achulo, 2022; Okoye et al., 2021). Financial literacy is associated with financial management (Tejero, Pilongo, & Pamaran, 2019) and is required for rural development to access enhanced resources (Askar et al., 2020). It also promotes efficient links between production and distribution (Jia, Qiu, & Yang, 2021), which has recently surged in reaching sustainable development goals (Dikshit & Pandey, 2021).

Rural development is a leading factor in economic growth of any country (Takhumova, 2020), influenced by socioeconomic conditions and resource availability (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA], 2021). It contributes to sustainable agriculture for independent oil palm smallholders by ensuring that the current use of resources does not deprive future generations of social, economic, and environmental benefits (Sukiyono et al., 2022) through coordination between stakeholders, an innovative financial approach (Zhou, Chen, & Li, 2018), and public expenditure management (Ngobeni & Muchopa, 2022) to increase market efficiency (Sgroi & Sciancalepore, 2022).

Thus, independent oil palm smallholders are expected to have an adjustment in resource allocation and income distribution (Pretorius & Pretorius, 2009) as part of the financial management dimensions (Wilson, 2019). Unfortunately, the efficiency of financial

management is still limited, while the promotion of rural development requires effective economic capabilities to generate sufficient results (Ma & Liu, 2020).

This research aims to prove whether household financial management promotes rural development using the theories of transaction cost (Williamson, 1998), financial transaction (Benston & Smith, 1976), public expenditure management (Premchand, 1994), and a rural development framework. The framework of household financial management is arranged based on aggregate management, operational management, risk management, and governance. Aggregate management provides priorities and fiscal sustainability. At the same time, operational management contributes to short-term and long-term decision-making, performance measurement, and strategic planning (Battistoni, Bonacelli, Colladon, & Schiraldi, 2013). Risk management is required to mitigate the risks of pursuing the objectives (Srinivas, 2019). Governance ensures that households are inclusive, accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable, effective, and efficient (Singh, Ansari, & Singh, 2009). Therefore, household financial management, expected to manifest in the quality and quantity of public services and resources (Taufiq & Yatminiwati, 2020), plays a significant role in determining livelihood strategies and diversification endeavors success for rural development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in Sambas District, one of the largest oil palm smallholder populations in West Kalimantan, reaching 2.11 million hectares (BPS-Statictics Indonesia, 2020; Nurliza, Dolorosa, & Suryadi, 2018). The research period ran from April to August 2022. This research employed a mixed method as a flexible and adaptive conceptual framework providing detailed insights and the generalizable (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021) and purposive sampling due to widespread geographic objects and methodological rigor (Ames, Glenton, & Lewin, 2019) with structured questionnaires frequently applied in social research (Roopa & Rani, 2012).

This study was systematically carried out with the following steps. Initially, characteristics of household financial management and the rural development of independent oil palm smallholders were identified using descriptive statistics (Cooksey, 2020). The characteristics of household financial management consisted of aggregate management (i.e., fiscal sustainability and resource allocation), operational management (i.e., cooperative performance and extension performance), risk management (i.e., investment, insurance, and savings), and governance (i.e., smallholders, firms, and government).

Rural development characteristics (Donnges, 2003) encompassed basic services (i.e., education, health), infrastructure conditions (i.e., economic infrastructure, energy infrastructure, communication and information, and clean water and sanitation) (Yarkova, 2020), accessibility or transportation (i.e., access to public transportation and transportation access condition of village or city or district roads) (Kaiser & Barstow, 2022), public services (i.e., access to government health insurance, access to other health insurance, and access to

sports facilities), and governance (i.e., autonomy and quality of human resources) (Popoola, Magidimisha-Chipungu, & Chipungu, 2022).

Additionally, the leverage of household financial management was determined using multidimensional scaling (MDS) with Rap-Palm Oil software to generate critical key factors affecting the situation of rural development. A semantic differential scale of three levels (least = 1 and most = 3 at opposite buttons) was utilized to acquire orderings of the most important in predetermined contexts (Rosenberg & Navarro, 2018; Takahashi, Ban, & Asada, 2016).

Finally, the structural equation model (SEM) was deployed with Lisrel software to assess whether household financial management promoted rural development among independent oil palm smallholders due to its generality and flexibility (Kang & Ahn, 2021). In SEM, there was a structural model and a measurement model for causal relationships between latent variables (household financial management and rural development) and their indicators with the following steps: data characteristics, reliability, and validity; evaluating model fit; model estimation; model re-specification; and reporting (Karakaya-Ozyer & Aksu-Dunya, 2018). In terms of data characteristics, 200 participants were required for the sample size (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), followed by interpretation (Mâţă, Clipa, & Tzafilkou, 2020). Model fit among latent variables utilized goodness-of-fit indices (Mulaik et al., 1989). Valid results were generated from maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) (Cham, Reshetnyak, Rosenfeld, & Breitbart, 2017), followed by re-specification of the model and reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Household Financial Management and Rural Development of Independent Oil Palm Smallholders

Characteristics of household financial management consisted of aggregate management, operational management, risk management, and governance, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 displays that the most essential factors for fiscal sustainability and resource allocation in aggregate management were on-farm income, food expenditure, land assets, plant age, improving road conditions to facilitate access to markets, using traditional healthcare, distance to the health facility, and a small number of school dependents. Besides, most of them did not join the cooperative in operational management due to the absence of aid for production facilities by the government, resulting in poor cooperative performance despite the easy-to-understand and well-communicated information and training by extension agents. They invested most in oil palm for fertilizers and pesticides, did not record cash flows, only memorized fresh fruit bunches (FFB) prices, and saved for assets, causing them to rarely have cash savings and no farm insurance. Most firms bought the FFB from a middleman, and a few of them went to factories some distance away.

Table 2 exhibits that the majority of independent oil palm smallholders were junior high school graduates and occasionally visited health centers for basic services. Concerning infrastructure, necessities and fuel, electricity from the state power, cell phones, and the

internet network were all easily accessible, but access to clean water and sanitation was more of a challenge. The inaccessible public transportation due to the poor village, city, and district roads caused independent oil palm smallholders to rely on their vehicles to obtain the necessities. Conversely, government health insurance and sports facilities were easily accessible, but their utilization remained minimal. Despite participating in agriculture meetings and training by the government, the quality of human resources was still lacking.

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Characteristics of Household Financial Management	%	Characteristics of Household Financial Management	%
Aggregate Management		**Operational Management**	
Fiscal sustainability		Cooperative performance:	
On-farm income (IDR/month):		Not joining the cooperative	**100**
≤ 1,000,000	13.33	Poor cooperative performance	**100**
1,000,000-5,000,000	**74**	Performance of extension agents:	
≥ 5,000,000	12.67	Extension information	**100**
Food expenditure (IDR/month)		Well communication	**100**
≤ 1,000,000	34.67	Training	**100**
1,000,000-5,000,000	**65.33**	**Risk Management**	
Land asset:		Investment in oil palm	**100**
Land ownership by one's own	**100**	Save for assets	**100**
Land area (ha)		No farm insurance	**100**
≤ 1	**46**	**Governance**	
1-2	38	Smallholders:	
≥ 2	16	Income for fertilizers and pesticides (IDR/month):	
Plant age (year):		< 100,000	**50**
< 5	1.33	100,000-500,000	20
5-10	**80.67**	> 500,000	30
> 10	18	Income for the debts (IDR/month):	
Transportation:		< 100,000	**86**
Village road conditions were bad	**100**	100,000-500,000	14
Accessible	**100**	Firms:	
Resource allocation		Sales of FFB:	
Using traditional healthcare	**100**	Middleman	**81.33**
Distance to health facility (km)		Factory	18.67
< 1	22	Farm distance to factory (km):	
1-5	**57**	1-5	24.67
> 5 km	21	> 5	**75.33**
No farm insurance	**100**	Government:	
School dependents (people):		No aid of production facilities by the government	**65.33**
None	30.67	The aid of production facilities by the government	34.67
1-3	**68.66**		
> 3	0.67		
None of financial knowledge	**100**		

TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Characteristics of Rural Development	%	Characteristics of Rural Development	%
Basic Services		**Accessibility or Transportation**	
Education:		No access to public transportation, but personal vehicles	100
Elementary School	20	Bad transportation access conditions of village, city, or district roads	100
Junior High School	55	**Public Services**	
Senior High School	23	Access to government health insurance	43
Diploma-Bachelor	3	Access to other health insurance	4
Health:		Access to sports facilities	100
Occasionally visiting health centers	96	**Governance**	
Frequently visiting health centers	4	Autonomy:	
Infrastructure Conditions		Participating in agriculture meetings by the government	100
Economic infrastructure:		Participating in agriculture training by the government	100
Good condition of shops	100	Quality of human resources:	
Ease of getting necessities	82	Elementary school of a village head	84
Energy infrastructure:		Diploma-Bachelor of village secretary	85
Using electricity from the state power	100		
Easy to obtain fuel for household	100		
Communication and information:			
Cell phone	100		
Available internet network	100		
Clean water and sanitation	100		

Table 3 portrays that the household financial management of independent oil palm smallholders met the requirements of the goodness of fit for the leverage interpretation.

TABLE 3. THE GOODNESS OF FIT HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Dimension of Household Financial	Stress	R^2	MDS	Monte-Carlo	Deviation (MDS-Monte Carlo)
Aggregate management	0.16	0.93	41.66	43.27	1.61
Operational Management	0.20	0.90	32.81	33.33	0.52
Risk management	0.12	0.96	48.33	48.66	0.33
Governance	0.18	0.91	59.73	58.12	1.61

Table 4 depicts the leverage of each household's financial management of independent oil palm smallholders. As displayed in Table 4, the most leverage of aggregate management, operational management, risk management, and governance were fiscal sustainability, the performance of extension agents, investment in oil palm cultivation, and firms, respectively.

Fiscal sustainability in aggregate management indicates the ability of local authorities to provide public services for smallholders (Wojtowicz & Hodzic, 2021). It has been linked to a sustainable economy (Wojtowicz & Hodzic, 2021), supply chains (Bancilhon, Charlotte, Karge, & Norton, 2018), and productivity (OECD, 2016). Independent oil palm smallholders have systemically lacked access to long-term finance due to limited collateral and insufficient finances (Bronkhorst et al., 2017) and the absence of active financial support from the government. While smallholders have not entirely achieved equalizing marginal products in

resource allocation, it has contributed to an enhancement in productivity (Marshall, Brown, Fritz, & Johnson, 2018).

TABLE 4. LEVERAGE OF HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIMENSIONS

Dimensions of Household Financial Management	Leverage (%)	
Aggregate management	Fiscal sustainability	**58.98**
	Resource allocation	41.02
Operational management	Cooperative performance	34.35
	Performance of extension agents	**65.65**
Risk management	Investment	**39.99**
	Savings	34.05
	Insurance	25.96
Governance	Smallholders	31.74
	Firms	**61.24**
	Government	7.02

In operational management, cooperatives' actions could represent the economic effectiveness principle (Giacomini, Chiaf, & Mazzoleni, 2017), with certain behaviors (Nurliza, Ruliyansyah, & Hazriani, 2020) for optimizing farm inputs and yield while promoting sustainable development (Deng, Chen, Zhao, & Wang, 2021). The role of extension services through guidance, encouragement, education, and training (Musa, Ismail, Ismail, & Elpawati, 2019) improved economic performance (Verhofstadt & Maertens, 2014) for value-added and labor productivity (Rokhani, Asrofi, Adi, Khasan, & Rondhi, 2021).

In risk management, investing in oil palm provided high economic profitability relative to other farm activities despite the high sunk costs and uncertain returns (Papenfus, 2000). Savings catalyzed capital creation and served as a driving force for generating higher savings for economic growth (Wieliczko, Kurdyś-Kujawska, & Sompolska-Rzechuła, 2020). Nevertheless, independent oil palm smallholders had no farm insurance due to their imperfect and non-existent access to it (Loeper, Drimie, & Blignaut, 2018), occasional contact with extension agents, and the location of their upstream areas (Mutaqin & Usami, 2019).

Concerning governance, most smallholders sold the FFB to middlemen regardless of poor quality, limited access to financial resources (Ichsan et al., 2021), and weak management (Irawan & Purwanto, 2020). An increase in FFB prices led to input usage for productivity, and a rise in input prices caused drawbacks to their farm performance and reduced hired labor (Hamdani, Yanti, & Budiwati, 2016). Firms could provide technical assistance to smallholders through public-private partnerships (Mikolajczyk, Mikulcak, Thompson, & Long, 2021). While the government, through regulatory frameworks, could provide an institutional strengthening model to overcome and minimize complex socio-economic issues (Raharja et al., 2020), such as organized production and livelihood systems (Dharmawan et al., 2020; Nurliza, Nugraha, Muthahhari, Pamela, & Suyatno, 2022).

Household Financial Management for Promoting Rural Development from Independent Oil Palm Smallholders

Table 5 discloses the nature of convergent validity through the construct reliability (CR) and variance extracted (VE) of the model.

TABLE 5. CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY (CR) AND VARIANCE EXTRACTED (VE)

Criteria	Household Financial Management (HoFiMana)				Rural Development (VilDevel)				
	AggMana	ManaOper	ManaRisk	Gover	BasicSer	InfraCon	AccTran	PubSer	GoverAd
Std. Loading Factor VE	0.91	0.99	0.80	0.80	0.91	0.85	0.71	0.60	0.89
Error VE	0.83	0.76	0.73	0.75	0.83	0.27	0.50	0.64	0.77
VE	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.51	.0.51	0.51	0.51
Overall VE > 0.50									
Std. Loading Factor CR	0.91	0.99	0.80	0.80	0.91	0.85	0.71	0.60	0.89
Error CR	0.83	0.76	0.73	0.75	0.83	0.27	0.50	0.64	0.77
CR	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83
Overall CR > 0.70									

Note: HoFiMana is household financial management/X, VilDevel is village development/Y, AggMana is aggregate management, ManaOper is operational management, ManaRisk is risk management, Gover is governance, BasicSer is basic service, InfraCon is infrastructure condition, AccTran is accessibility or transportation, PubSer is public service, and GoverAd is government administration.

As displayed in Table 6, all criteria in the goodness of fit test (15 criteria) revealed that the model was suitable for problem analysis.

TABLE 6. THE GOODNESS OF FIT

GOF	Standard Value	Estimated	Conclusion
X^2/DF	$1.0 \geq x \leq 5.0$	1.00	Fit
NCP	Small value with narrow intervals	299.87 (245.36; 8.44)	Fit
SNCP (NCP/n)	Small value	1.9	Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.001	Fit
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.91	Fit
NNFI	≥ 0.90	0.91	Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.92	Fit
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.93	Fit
RFI	≥ 0.90	0.93	Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.93	Fit
PGFI	0-1	0.53	Fit
RMR	≤ 0.05	0.012	Fit

The findings of household financial management's effect on rural development from independent oil palm smallholders were employed to obtain an overview of whether household financial management promoted rural development, generated by the structural (Figure 1) and measurement models (Table 7).

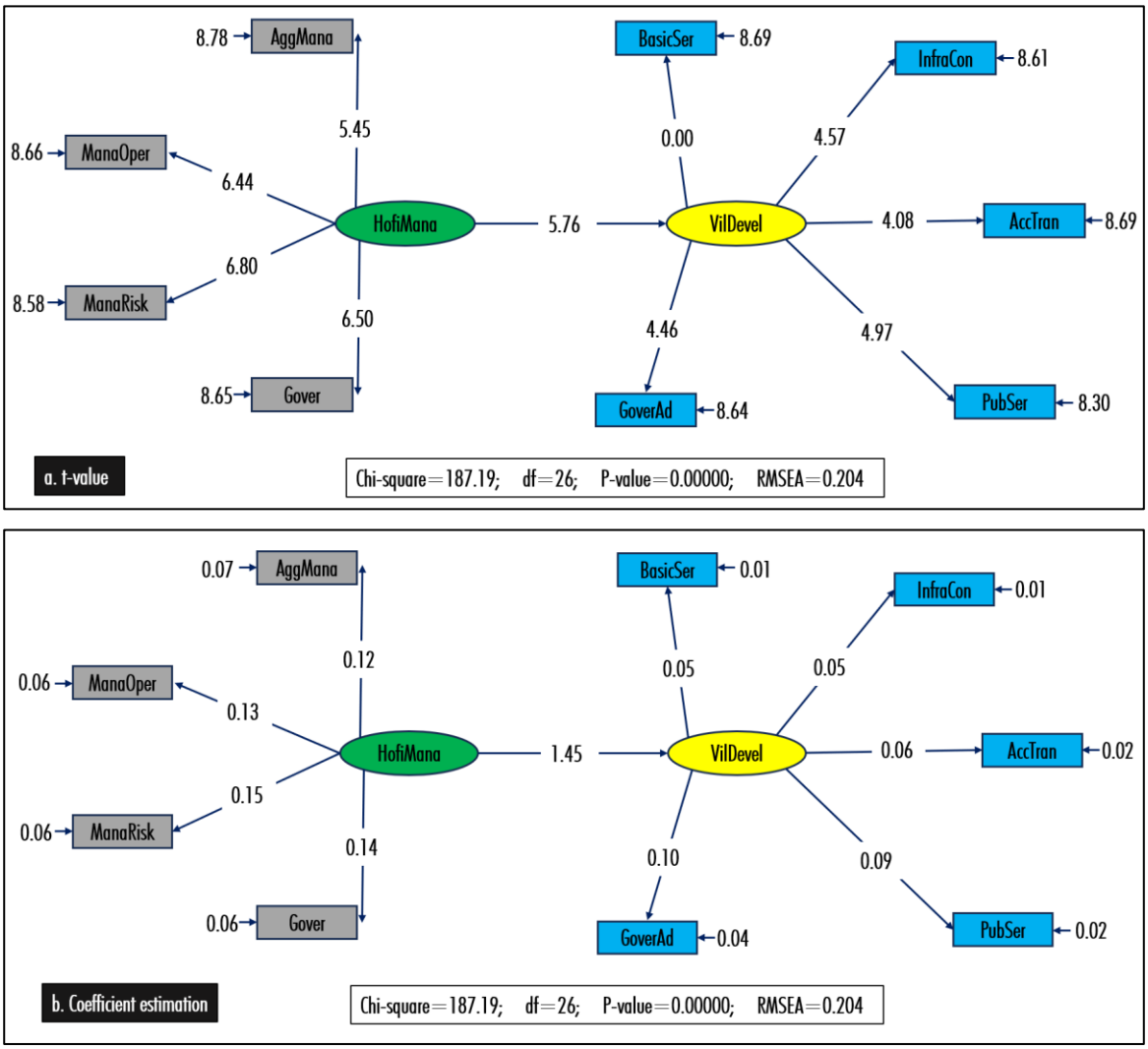

FIGURE 1. STRUCTURAL MODEL

Figure 1 illustrates that household financial management promoted rural development, indicated by a significant positive effect of aggregate management, operational management, risk management, and governance on basic services, infrastructure conditions, accessibility or transportation, public service, and governance.

Household financial management of independent oil palm smallholders has been associated with more rapid rural development due to its effects on accessibility and infrastructure for market opportunities (Tok & Heng, 2022), basic and public services, governance regarding participation in agriculture meetings, and training to improve productivity and shock resilience (United Nation and Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, 2022). Policies and public expenditures affected the degree to which financial management of independent oil palm smallholders to promoted rural development (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2016). The inclusive financial management system influenced rural development through economic growth (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2016), and economic growth often coexisted with resource allocation due to the financial market imperfections of human capital investments

(Topuz, 2022). The aggregate rate of economic growth determined poverty rates (Hill, 2021), income inequality, and rural development (McKnight, 2019).

Furthermore, Table 7 portrays the causal relationship between latent variables and their indicators (confirmatory factor analysis model).

TABLE 7. MODEL MEASUREMENT

Indicators of latent variable	Coef. estimated	Error	R^2
Rural Development (VilDevel/Y):			
Basic services (BasicSer)	0.66	0.013	0.22
Infrastructure conditions (InfraCon)	0.46	0.0067	0.22
Accessibility or transportation (AccTran)	0.85	0.013	0.33
Public service (PubSer)	0.80	0.018	0.24
Governance (GoverAd)	**1.00**	0.044	0.17
Household financial management (HoFiMana/X):			
Aggregate management (AggMana)	0.025	0.089	0.0027
Operational management (ManaOper)	**0.22**	0.095	0.25
Risk management (ManaRisk)	**0.22**	0.87	0.28
Governance (Gover)	0.16	0,074	0.16

Regarding rural development, Table 7 depicts that governance took the lead, whereas operational management and risk management had the greatest impact on household financial management.

Governance contributed to the development of rural areas, such as in livelihoods, community-based economic empowerment, human resources, and rural environment problems (Nurlinah, Haryanto, & Sunardi, 2020). Village capacity building and information (Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020) were urgently required to solve governance problems in the development of rural areas, requiring effective external inputs to generate sufficient results. Hence, innovative multi-actor collaborations were highly required to reinforce and provide a cloak for policy decisions (Doyle, 2018; Medina-García, Nagarajan, Castillo-Vysokolan, Béatse, & Van den Broeck, 2021).

Operational and risk management served as strategies to engage independent oil palm smallholders in supply chains to access inputs and farm management skills while securing sustainable production (Accountability Framework Initiative [AFI], 2019; International Finance Corporation, 2016). Moreover, households' transition to confront a variety of yields, unstable output and input prices, and changes in production technology have become strategic decisions (Cervantes-Godoy, Kimura, & Antón, 2013).

The effect of each rural development dimension on household financial management is presented in Table 8.

Table 8 displays that governance imposed the most direct effect (in line with Table 7), followed by public service, accessibility or transportation, basic services, and infrastructure conditions.

TABLE 8. EFFECT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS ON HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Rural Development Dimension	Effect on Household Financial Management
Basic services (BasicSer)	0.07
Infrastructure conditions (InfraCon)	0.07
Accessibility or transportation (AccTran)	0.08
Public service (PubSer)	0.13
Governance (GoverAd)	**0.15**

Basic and public services must be provided for rural economic growth. Since these services represent both a supply and demand factor for economic development, it becomes extremely difficult for the economic activities of independent oil palm smallholders to take off and stay sustainable (International Labour Office, 2017). Additionally, the community's economic security, social cohesion, and equitable and inclusive development have become their priorities (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019).

Rural accessibility has played a significant role in enhancing people's lives and raising the opportunities for sustainable social and economic development in rural areas (Ahmed & Eklund, 2019). Lack of accessibility could have a worse effect on wider aspects, such as poverty, health, and educational measurements (Soseco, 2016).

Rural infrastructure is a crucial factor for production conditions and the functioning of society (Thacker et al., 2018) due to its contribution to rural economic growth and poverty alleviation (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2012) by enhancing agricultural productivity (Rosegrant, 2020) and fostering commercialization (Alemu & Dachito, 2020). Inadequate transportation infrastructure in rural areas caused a lack of mobility and constraints on rural development, necessitating interdependencies of assets, institutions, and knowledge (Thacker et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

The results uncovered that household financial management promoted rural development. It was associated with more rapid rural development due to its effects on accessibility and infrastructure for market opportunities, basic and public services, and governance regarding participation in agriculture meetings and training by the government to improve productivity. Economic growth as a result of household financial management has frequently coexisted with resource allocation. The aggregate rate of economic growth determined poverty rates, income inequality, and rural development. Governance appeared to be the most direct effect of rural development, contributing to livelihoods, community-based economic empowerment, human resources, and rural environmental problems. Operational and risk management significantly influenced household financial management, engaging independent oil palm smallholders in supply chains, access to inputs, and households' transition to confront a variety of yields, unstable output and input prices, and changes in production technology. Thus, innovative multi-actor collaborations were highly demanded to reinforce and provide a cloak for policy decisions.

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