

## Research Article

# Analysis of the Mediation Model of Community Participation in the Relationship Between Village Head Leadership and Youth Organization Empowerment

Rachmat Rachmat: STISIP Guna Nusantara Cianjur, **Indonesia**; Email: rachmatstisipgunanusantara@gmail.com

Warno Warno: STISIP Guna Nusantara Cianjur, **Indonesia**

Shifa Siti Nafisah: STISIP Guna Nusantara Cianjur, **Indonesia**

\*Corresponding Author: rachmatstisipgunanusantara@gmail.com

DOI: | **received:** 01-10-2026; **accepted:** 01-20-2026; **online:** 02-27-2026

**Abstract:** *This study aims to analyze the mediating role of community participation in the relationship between village head leadership and the empowerment of Karang Taruna in Sindanglaka Village, Karangtengah Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency. The study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory design, involving 50 respondents who were members of Karang Taruna, using a saturation sampling technique. Data collection was conducted via a questionnaire using a Likert scale and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on SmartPLS. The results indicate that village head leadership has a positive and significant effect on community participation, with a coefficient of 0.981 and a p-value of 0.000. However, the direct effect of leadership on the empowerment of Karang Taruna was not significant, with a coefficient of 0.369 and a p-value of 0.085. On the other hand, community participation was found to have a positive and significant effect on the empowerment of Karang Taruna, with a coefficient of 0.615 and a p-value of 0.003. Furthermore, the indirect effect of leadership on empowerment through community participation was also significant, with a coefficient of 0.603 and a p-value of 0.003. These findings indicate that community participation acts as an effective mediating variable in bridging the relationship between village head leadership and the empowerment of Karang Taruna. Thus, inclusive and participatory leadership is key to increasing community involvement, which ultimately impacts the strengthening of the youth organization's capacity and autonomy. This study provides a theoretical contribution to the development of a leadership- and participation-based empowerment model, as well as practical implications for village governments in designing youth empowerment policies.*

**Keywords:** Village Head Leadership, Community Participation, Empowerment, Youth Organization

## 1. Introduction

The development of democracy and effective governance at the local level cannot be separated from the quality of leadership and the level of community participation. In the context of village governance, the village head plays a strategic role as the primary actor capable of mobilizing human resources, building public trust, and encouraging community involvement in various development programs (Deniar, 2021; Sedia, 2021). Effective leadership is not only oriented toward achieving administrative goals but also toward the ability to empower the community, particularly the younger generation, so they can play an active role in social life and regional development (Patrianti et al., 2023). One strategic platform for youth development at the village level is the Karang Taruna organization. This organization plays a crucial role in enhancing the capacity, creativity, and participation of young people in various social, economic, and cultural activities (Nusantara et al., 2022). However, in practice, the empowerment of Karang Taruna often faces various challenges, such as low member participation, a lack of support from the village government, and a shortage of facilities and sustained guidance. These conditions indicate that the empowerment of does not solely depend on the existence of the organization but also on leadership factors and active community involvement (Aquatama et al., 2024).

Village head leadership is a key factor in creating an environment conducive to fostering community participation. Leaders who can communicate effectively, provide motivation, and involve the community in the decision-making process tend to be more successful in encouraging active participation (Holilah & Ismail, 2022). Community participation itself is a crucial element in the

empowerment process, as through participation, the community is not merely an object of development but also a subject with a role in determining the direction and success of implemented programs (Sembiring & Agustin, 2023). Thus, community participation can be viewed as a mechanism bridging the relationship between leadership and empowerment.

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between leadership and empowerment is not always direct. There are intervening variables that influence the strength of this relationship, one of which is community participation. Good leadership fosters increased community participation, which ultimately contributes to the success of empowerment (Fitriyana et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to examine how community participation functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between village head leadership and the empowerment of Karang Taruna.

This phenomenon is also evident in the context of Sindanglaka Village, Karangtengah Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency, where the dynamics of Karang Taruna empowerment have undergone significant changes in tandem with shifts in the village head's leadership style. In the previous period, poor communication and limited involvement from the village government led to minimal youth participation in organizational activities. However, during the subsequent leadership period, there was an increase in youth activity and engagement, marked by a rise in membership numbers and an expansion of social activities. This suggests that effective leadership can enhance community participation, which ultimately impacts the empowerment of youth organizations.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to develop a mediation model of community participation in the relationship between village head leadership and the empowerment of Karang Taruna. This study is expected not only to provide empirical contributions to understanding the relationships among variables but also to offer theoretical contributions to the development of a community empowerment model based on leadership and participation. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for village governments and other stakeholders in formulating more effective policies to enhance the empowerment of the younger generation at the local level.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### Leadership

Leadership is one of the key factors in the success of an organization or government, including at the village level. Conceptually, leadership can be defined as an individual's ability to influence, guide, and motivate individuals or groups to achieve common goals (Holilah & Ismail, 2022). According to Stephen P. Robbins in Yimam (2022), leadership is the ability to influence a group in order to achieve organizational goals. In the context of village governance, the village head functions not only as an administrator but also as a leader responsible for fostering community participation and improving residents' well-being (Kiyato, Purwanto, & Budiati, 2024).

Effective village leadership is characterized by the ability to motivate, build good communication, and create an environment conducive to community engagement (Pilaili, Pusparini, & Nurabiah, 2022). The transformational leadership approach, as proposed by Bernard M. Bass, emphasizes the importance of leaders in inspiring, providing a vision, and driving positive change within an organization (Mihaela, 2021). In this regard, village heads who are able to apply a transformational leadership style will be more effective in empowering the community, including the younger generation who are members of Karang Taruna (Effendi & Sahertian, 2022).

In addition, leadership also plays a role in building trust and legitimacy in the eyes of the community. Leaders who are responsive to community needs and capable of involving residents in the

decision-making process will enhance a sense of belonging toward development programs (Sitakar & Rangkuti, 2024). Thus, village head leadership not only directly influences empowerment but also facilitates it through increased community participation as an intermediary mechanism in achieving sustainable development goals.

### **Community Participation**

Community participation is one of the key elements in the development and empowerment process. Generally, participation is defined as the active involvement of individuals or groups in various stages of activities, ranging from planning and implementation to program evaluation (Cahyono & Mufidayati, 2021). According to Cohen and Uphoff in Ningsih dan Ma'ruf (2023), community participation encompasses involvement in decision-making, the implementation of activities, the utilization of outcomes, and the evaluation of development. This indicates that participation is not merely physical presence but also reflects tangible contributions to the development process.

In the context of social organizations such as Karang Taruna, community participation particularly among youth serves as a key indicator in determining the success of empowerment programs (Mulyasari, Maizida, & Purwandani, 2024; Pratama & Rahmat, 2018). A high level of participation indicates awareness, concern, and social responsibility among community members (Pratama & Rahmat, 2018). Conversely, low participation is often caused by a lack of motivation, minimal communication, and weak leadership that fails to accommodate community aspirations (Firmansyah, Syarif, & Ruyadi, 2021).

Community participation also plays a strategic role as a mediating variable in the relationship between leadership and empowerment (Alkadafi, Safiah, & Desmiwar, 2019). Effective leadership fosters increased community participation through inclusive and participatory communication approaches. Furthermore, high participation strengthens the empowerment process because the community is directly involved in decision-making and program implementation (Ahn & Bessiere, 2022). Thus, community participation serves as a bridge connecting the role of leaders and the success of empowerment, making it crucial to examine within a mediation research model.

### **Empowerment**

Empowerment is a concept related to efforts to enhance the capabilities, independence, and capacity of individuals or groups to address various social challenges (Islam, 2017). According to Edi Suharto in Fitriyana (2023), empowerment is a process to strengthen the community's ability to meet their basic needs, access resources, and participate in the development process. In the context of Karang Taruna, empowerment is directed toward developing the potential of the younger generation so they can play an active role in social activities and community development (Firman, 2021).

Karang Taruna, as a youth organization, plays a strategic role in shaping character, enhancing skills, and fostering leadership qualities among the younger generation. Empowerment within this organization can be achieved through various activities, such as skills training, social activities, and participation in village development (Abdul, 2022; Fadli, 2019). However, the success of empowerment depends on the support of various factors, particularly leadership and community participation.

The empowerment process emphasizes building individuals' capacity to develop self-confidence, decision-making skills, and independence in action. Additionally, empowerment encompasses social aspects, namely the ability to participate in community life and contribute to development (Mouchrek & Benson, 2023). Thus, the empowerment of Karang Taruna focuses not only on improving individual capabilities but also on strengthening the collective role of youth in creating positive social change

(Sukmayadi & Asyahidda, 2024). Therefore, it is important to understand the factors influencing empowerment, including the roles of leadership and community participation as interrelated variables.

### 3. Hypothesis Development

#### **The Effect of Village Head Leadership on Community Participation**

Village head leadership plays a strategic role in fostering community engagement in various development activities. Theoretically, effective leadership is characterized by the ability to foster open communication, provide motivation, and create a participatory atmosphere (Egho, Pradana, & Sayrani, 2023). According to Bernard M. Bass, transformational leadership can increase member engagement through inspiration, individual attention, and intellectual stimulation (Mihaela, 2021). In the context of village governance, village heads who are able to adopt this leadership style will be more successful in mobilizing the community to participate actively (Mohulaingo, Podungge, & Bokingo, 2022).

Community participation is influenced not only by internal individual factors but also by external factors such as leadership. Leaders who are responsive to community needs and able to involve residents in the decision-making process will increase a sense of ownership of the programs being implemented (Affandi, Marijan, & Windyastuti, 2023). This aligns with the view of Cohen and Uphoff, who emphasize that community participation can grow when leaders provide the space and opportunity for it (Abdalla, Samah, Hashim, & Rosnon, 2022).

In practice, village head leadership that lacks communication and transparency tends to reduce community participation. Conversely, inclusive and participatory leadership encourages the community to actively engage in social and development activities (Farleni & Hanafi, 2023). Therefore, it can be assumed that the better the quality of the village head's leadership, the higher the level of community participation.

#### **The Influence of Community Participation on the Empowerment of Karang Taruna**

Community participation is a key element in the empowerment process, as empowerment fundamentally emphasizes the active involvement of the community in various development activities (Saputra, Aisyah, & Darmanto, 2021). According to Edi Suharto in Setianingsi et al. (2022), empowerment is not only related to enhancing individual capacity but also to the community's ability to participate in decision-making and program implementation. Thus, community participation is a determining factor in the success of the empowerment process.

In the context of Karang Taruna, youth participation is crucial to the sustainability and effectiveness of the organization's programs. High participation rates reflect the members' awareness, concern, and social responsibility. Conversely, low participation will result in suboptimal program implementation and weak member empowerment (Ahsan, Fitrianto, Niam, Fitriyah, & Insiyah, 2023).

Community participation also provides opportunities for individuals to develop their skills, expand their social networks, and boost their self-confidence. This process directly contributes to enhancing the capacity of both individuals and groups, which is at the core of empowerment (Azzahra & Sugiarto, 2022). Therefore, the higher the level of community participation, the higher the level of empowerment of the Youth Association.

#### **The Influence of Village Head Leadership on the Empowerment of Karang Taruna**

The leadership of the village head plays a crucial role in determining the success of community empowerment programs, including Karang Taruna. Effective leaders are able to create supportive policies, provide facilities, and motivate the community to participate in empowerment activities (Bahri, 2023). According to Stephen P. Robbins (Yimam, 2022), good leadership influences group performance through direction, coordination, and motivation.

In the context of empowering Karang Taruna, village heads who possess a vision and commitment to the development of the younger generation will be more active in providing support, both in the form of policies and resources. This support will lead to an increase in the organization’s activities and the quality of its programs. Conversely, leadership that shows little concern for youth empowerment will result in stagnation in the organization’s activities (Arifin, 2023).

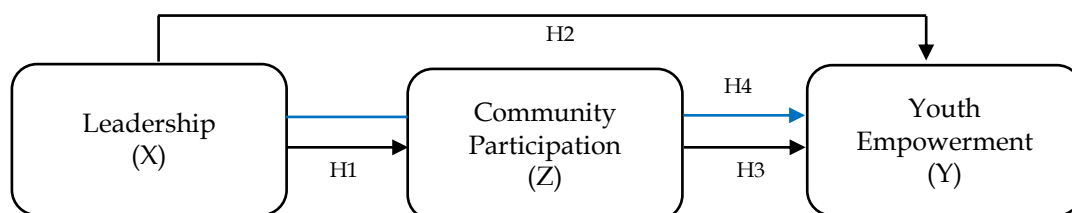
However, the influence of leadership on empowerment is not always direct, as there are other influencing factors, such as community participation (Fatimatuzzahroh et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it can generally be assumed that the leadership of the village head has a positive influence on the empowerment of Karang Taruna (Wali, Rukmana, & Ningsih, 2024).

**The Influence of Leadership on the Empowerment of Karang Taruna through Community Participation**

In theoretical studies, the relationship between leadership and empowerment is not always direct; rather, it can involve mediating variables. Community participation is one variable that plays a crucial role in bridging this relationship (Iskandar, 2023). Effective leadership fosters increased community participation through open communication, motivation, and involvement in the decision-making process (Martí, Ballesteros-Velázquez, Ozerinjauregi, & Máiquez, 2021).

Furthermore, high levels of community participation will strengthen the empowerment process, as the community becomes not only an object but also a subject in development. This aligns with the concept of empowerment, which emphasizes the active involvement of the community in various activities (Petriello et al., 2024). Thus, community participation serves as a mechanism linking leadership and empowerment (Petriello et al., 2024).

In the context of Karang Taruna, a village head who is able to increase youth participation will indirectly enhance the success of empowerment programs. Therefore, it can be assumed that community participation mediates the relationship between village head leadership and Karang Taruna empowerment (Sapitri & Alexandro, 2021).



**Figure 1. Research Framework**

**4. RESEARCH METHOD**

**Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to examine the relationship between village head leadership, community participation as a mediating variable, and the empowerment of Karang Taruna. The study was conducted in Sindanglaka Village, Karangtengah Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency, with the population consisting of all Karang Taruna members. The sample was determined using purposive sampling based on the criterion of member activity in the organization’s activities (Mafriningsianti & Setiadi, 2026). The population in this study consists of all Karang Taruna members in Sindanglaka Village, Karangtengah Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency. This population includes all young people registered as members and involved in organizational activities, totaling 50 people, both active and passive. This population was selected because it is relevant to the

research objective of examining the empowerment of Karang Taruna and the factors influencing it, namely village head leadership and community participation.

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, which involves selecting a sample based on specific criteria tailored to the research needs. The criteria for respondents included in the sample were: (1) members of Karang Taruna who are still active in organizational activities, (2) have experience participating in empowerment programs or activities, and (3) are willing to serve as research respondents. Because the population size is relatively small, the sampling technique employed is a census (saturated sampling), meaning the entire population is included as the research sample (Setiadi, 2026). Data collection was conducted via a questionnaire using a Likert scale, supplemented by observation and documentation. The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability to ensure data accuracy. Data analysis utilized path analysis or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through tests of the outer model, inner model, path coefficients, and bootstrapping to examine the direct and indirect effects among variables, particularly the mediating role of community participation

### 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the realm of analysis, the measurement model (outer model) serves to assess the validity and reliability of a research model. The outer model also plays a role in explaining the relationship between each indicator and the latent variable it represents. In other words, the measurement model is used to test the suitability of instruments through validity and reliability testing (Maulana et al., 2025; Setiadi, et al., 2025).

Validity testing in this study was conducted using two measurement methods: convergent validity and discriminant validity (Setiadi et al., 2025). Convergent validity is one of the essential criteria in analytical testing with SmartPLS (Prakoso & Setiadi, 2026). The evaluation of convergent validity in SmartPLS using the reflective indicator approach is conducted through factor loading tests. Factor loadings describe the level of correlation between scores on a specific item or indicator and the overall construct score, thereby indicating the extent to which the indicator is able to represent the measured construct. As a general guideline, factor loadings above 0.70 are considered adequate for confirmatory research, while values above 0.60 are still acceptable in exploratory research. In this study, a factor loading criterion of greater than 0.70 was used. Additionally, convergent validity can be evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, provided that the AVE value is greater than 0.50. The overview of the causal relationships among constructs along with the factor loading values for each indicator is presented in Figure 2:

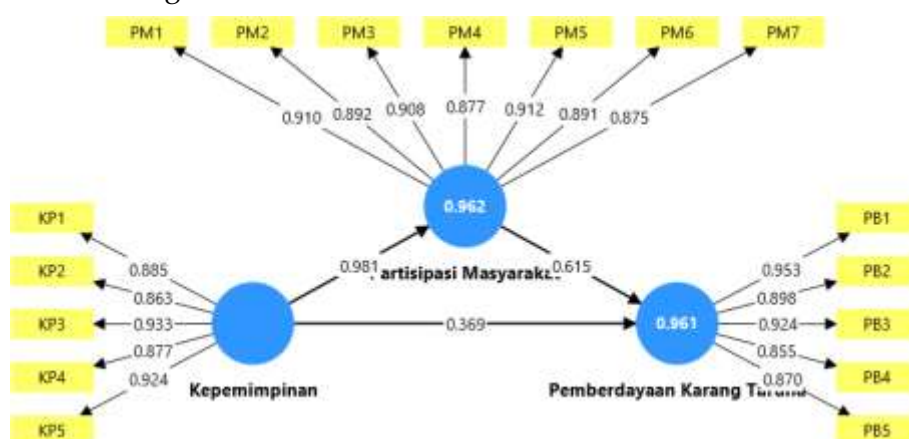


Figure 2. Outer Model  
Source: processed using SMART PLS4 (2026)

Figure 2 shows the convergent validity obtained through data processing using PLS software. The evaluation was conducted by examining the factor loadings for each construct indicator. A construct is considered to meet convergent validity if the factor loading is greater than 0.70 and the AVE value exceeds 0.5. The test results obtained are as follows:

**Table 1. Final Factor Loadings**

Variable (Symbol)	Indicator	Factor Loadings	Note	AVE	CA	CR
Leadership (X)	X1	0.885	Valid	0.804	0.939	0.941
	X2	0.863	Valid			
	X3	0.933	Valid			
	X4	0.877	Valid			
	X5	0.924	Valid			
Community Participation (Z)	Z1	0.910	Valid	0.801	0.959	0.959
	Z2	0.892	Valid			
	Z3	0.908	Valid			
	Z4	0.877	Valid			
	Z5	0.912	Valid			
	Z6	0.891	Valid			
	Z7	0.875	Valid			
Empowerment of Youth Organizations (Y)	Y1	0.953	Valid	0.811	0.941	0.944
	Y2	0.898	Valid			
	Y3	0.924	Valid			
	Y4	0.855	Valid			
	Y5	0.870	Valid			

Table 1, information regarding the loading results Factor for each manifest variable indicates that all indicators for the latent variable have values greater than 0.70, thus these indicators are deemed valid. Furthermore, each research variable has an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value that exceeds the established minimum threshold of 0.5. With the achievement of this value, all variables used in this study can be deemed valid in describing or representing the latent variables being measured. This indicates that the indicators or manifest variables used possess sufficient ability to explain the intended construct. In other words, the use of manifest variables in the research model is consistent with the standards for testing convergent validity because it meets the required AVE value. This reinforces the confidence that the relationship between the indicators and the constructs they represent is reliable and can be used as a basis for further analysis.

The test results indicate that the data used is reliable, meaning all indicators demonstrate consistency in measuring each variable. This is demonstrated by a Composite Reliability (CR) value exceeding 0.7 and a Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) value above 0.6. Meanwhile, testing of the Structural Model (Inner Model) was conducted to assess the relationships among latent variables. This evaluation was performed by examining path coefficient values to determine whether the emerging effects were significant or not, using the *bootstrapping* technique.

**Table 2. Cross-Loading Factors**

Indicator	Leadership (X)	Community Participation (X2)	Youth Empowerment (Y)
X1	0.885	0.861	0.850
X2	0.863	0.838	0.825
X3	0.933	0.918	0.919
X4	0.877	0.858	0.855
X5	0.924	0.919	0.909
Z1	0.901	0.891	0.872
Z2	0.925	0.921	0.923
Z3	0.875	0.888	0.850
Z4	0.896	0.911	0.893
Z5	0.861	0.890	0.852
Z6	0.884	0.898	0.897
Z7	0.890	0.900	0.879
Y1	0.934	0.939	0.948
Y2	0.887	0.874	0.898
Y3	0.933	0.932	0.923
Y4	0.840	0.802	0.863
Y5	0.836	0.847	0.855

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that the Cross-Loading Factor values indicate a higher correlation between each latent construct and its corresponding indicator compared to other constructs. Thus, it can be concluded that the indicators used meet the criteria for measuring latent variables.

**Table 3. R-Square Results**

Variable	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Community Participation	0.962	0.961
Empowerment of the Youth Organization	0.961	0.959

The *R-squared* value indicates that the variables in the model have a very strong ability to explain the dependent variable. Community Participation has an R-squared value of 0.962, meaning that approximately 96.2% of the variation in community participation can be explained by the variables in the model, while the remaining 3.8% is influenced by other factors outside the model. Meanwhile, Youth Empowerment has an *R-square* value of 0.961, indicating that 96.1% of its variation can be explained by the model. Overall, these results indicate that the research model has a very high level of explanatory power. Next, hypothesis testing was conducted after the data met the measurement criteria using the *bootstrapping* method in Smart PLS. This technique does not require the assumption of a normal distribution or a large sample size (Setiadi et al.,2025) . Testing was performed through an analysis of path coefficients, *t-values*, and *p-values* to assess the relationships between variables, as well as parameter coefficients indicating the significance level of each variable.

**Table 4. Path Significance Test**

Relationship	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P-values
Leadership -> Community Participation	0.981	175.095	0.000
Leadership -> Empowerment	0.369	1,724	0.085
Community Participation -> Empowerment	0.615	2,937	0.003
Leadership -> Community Participation -> Youth Organization Empowerment	0.603	2.957	0.003

Based on Table 4, which shows that the structural model (*inner model*), based on path coefficient values, t-statistics, and p-values, the following direct and indirect effects can be concluded:

### **The Effect of Leadership on Community Participation (H1)**

The analysis results indicate that leadership has a positive and significant effect on community participation, with a coefficient value of 0.981, a T-statistic of 175.095, and a p-value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted; the very high coefficient value indicates that an improvement in leadership quality is substantially capable of driving an increase in community participation. Statistically, these results are very strong and indicate that leadership is a primary determinant in shaping community engagement. These findings support Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory in (Mihaela, 2021), which emphasizes that leaders capable of inspiring and providing individual attention are more effective in motivating members to actively engage. This is also consistent with the views of Cohen and Uphoff in Abdalla et al. (2022) that community participation can flourish when leaders provide ample space and opportunities for residents to engage in the development process

### **The Influence of Leadership on the Empowerment of Karang Taruna (H2)**

The analysis results indicate that there is a positive relationship between leadership and the empowerment of Karang Taruna, with a coefficient of 0.369; however, this relationship is not statistically significant (T-statistic 1.724; p-value 0.085  $> 0.05$ ). This finding indicates that the second hypothesis (H2) is rejected, suggesting that while leadership has the potential to enhance empowerment, this influence is not yet strong enough to be empirically proven in this model. Thus, it is possible that other factors play a more dominant role in influencing the empowerment of Karang Taruna. This aligns with the study by Fatimatuzzahroh et al. (2021), which states that the influence of leadership on empowerment is often indirect

### **The Influence of Community Participation on the Empowerment of Karang Taruna (H3)**

The results of the analysis show that community participation has a positive and significant effect on the empowerment of Karang Taruna, with a coefficient of 0.615, a t-statistic of 2.937, and a p-value of 0.003 ( $< 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that the third hypothesis (H3) is accepted; thus, the higher the level of community involvement, the higher the level of empowerment of Karang Taruna. Community participation plays a crucial role in strengthening the capacity and empowerment of this youth organization. These findings reinforce Edi Suharto's theory, which states that empowerment is essentially a process of active community involvement in decision-making and program implementation. Youth involvement in social activities enhances their capacity and self-confidence, which are the core of empowerment itself

### **The Effect of Leadership on the Empowerment of Karang Taruna through Community Participation (H4)**

The indirect effect of leadership on the empowerment of Karang Taruna through community participation yielded positive and significant results, with a coefficient of 0.603, a T-statistic of 2.957, and a p-value of 0.003 ( $< 0.05$ ). This finding indicates that the third hypothesis (H4) is accepted. This demonstrates that community participation acts as an effective mediating variable in bridging the relationship between leadership and empowerment. In other words, good leadership enhances community participation, which ultimately leads to increased empowerment of Karang Taruna. This finding also confirms that the indirect mechanism has a greater influence than the direct effect of leadership on empowerment. These findings confirm the research conducted by Iskandar (2023) as well as Sapitri and Alexandro (2021), which positions participation as a key mechanism or "bridge" connecting the leader's role with the success of empowerment. Inclusive leadership in Sindanglaka Village successfully increased youth participation, which ultimately effectively fostered the independence and organizational capacity of Karang Taruna

## Discussion

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of the relationship between leadership roles, community engagement, and the strengthening of youth organizations' capacity at the village level. The primary focus of this discussion is how the quality of a village head's leadership can bring about tangible change through effective participatory mechanisms.

First, it was found that the leadership style of the village head serves as the primary driver in boosting community participation. Effective leadership focuses not only on administration but also on the ability to motivate and foster open communication with residents. This finding aligns with Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory as cited in Mihaella (2021), which emphasizes that leaders capable of providing inspiration and individual attention are more successful in mobilizing their members to actively engage. This also reinforces the view of Cohen and Uphoff in Abdalla et al. (2022) that community participation can thrive when leaders provide space, opportunities, and trust for residents to participate in the development process.

However, the research findings reveal a unique pattern: village head leadership does not automatically lead to strong empowerment of Karang Taruna when exercised directly. Even if a leader possesses a sound vision, their influence on the autonomy of the youth organization will not be optimal without the presence of other supporting factors. This finding aligns with the study by Fatimatuszahroh et al. (2021), which states that the relationship between leadership and empowerment is often indirect and requires mediating variables to achieve the desired impact to the fullest extent.

On the other hand, community participation has proven to play a crucial role in determining the success of empowerment. Through active involvement in various activities, members of Karang Taruna have the opportunity to hone their skills, expand their networks, and boost their self-confidence. This phenomenon validates Edi Suharto's theory in \*(Setianingsi et al., 2022) , which positions participation as the core of the empowerment process, where the community is positioned as the subject determining the direction of its own development, not merely as an object receiving aid.

The most important conclusion of this study is the strategic role of community participation as a "bridge" or mediator. Inclusive and participatory leadership by the village head must first be able to raise residents' awareness to get involved, which will ultimately lead to the strengthening of Karang Taruna's capacity and autonomy. This finding confirms previous research by Iskandar (2023) as well as Sapitri and Alexandro (2021), which asserts that mediation mechanisms through participation are key to linking a leader's strategic role with the success of empowerment programs at the local level. Thus, the success of youth organizations in villages depends heavily on the extent to which leaders are able to embrace and involve youth in every stage of development

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the leadership of the village head plays a vital role, though not always a direct one, in the process of empowering Karang Taruna in Sindanglaka Village. The main focus of these findings is that community participation has been empirically proven to act as a significant mediating variable that bridges the relationship between leadership quality and the success of youth empowerment.

Specifically, the analysis results show that the leadership of the village head has a positive and highly significant influence on community participation. This confirms that a leader's ability to motivate, inspire, and foster open communication is a key determinant that drives residents to actively engage in development programs. However, an anomaly was found where the village head's leadership did not have a significant direct effect on the empowerment of Karang Taruna. This indicates that leadership style alone, without mechanisms for community engagement, is not strong enough to foster autonomy and strengthen the capacity of youth organizations independently.

On the other hand, community participation has proven to be a strong direct driver of empowerment. The active involvement of members in every stage of the activities provides an opportunity for young people to develop their personal potential and social responsibility, which are at the core of empowerment itself. A crucial point in this study is that inclusive leadership must first be able to foster a sense of participation in order to lead to optimal empowerment. As a practical suggestion, village governments need to focus on a leadership style that provides ample space for participation to ensure that youth empowerment programs run effectively and sustainably.

## 7. REFERENCES

- Abdalla, Fadhila Hassan, Samah, Asnarulkhad Abuu, Hashim, Ahmad Hariza, & Rosnon, Moh'd Roslan. (2022). Relationship Between Socio-Economic Factors and Participation in Decision Making in Tourism Industry Among Women in Zanzibar. *Journal of Economics and Business*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1992.05.02.419>
- Abdul, Ahwan. (2022). Penyuluhan Pelatihan Kepemimpinan Kepada Karang Taruna Desa Grabagan Sidohajo Kec.Susukan Kab.Semarang. *Ijecs Indonesian Journal of Empowerment and Community Services*, 2(2), 76. <https://doi.org/10.32585/ijecs.v2i2.1838>
- Affandi, Mochamad, Marijan, Kacung, & Windyastuti, Dwi. (2023). Participatory Budgeting in Indonesia: From the Policy Innovation to the Democracy Innovation. *The Journal of Society & Media*, 6(2), 527–565. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v6n2.p527-565>
- Ahn, Young Joo, & Bessiere, Jeanne. (2022). The Role of Participative Leadership in Empowerment and Resident Participation. *Sustainability*, 14(18), 11223. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141811223>
- Ahsan, Muhamad, Fitrianto, Achmad Room, Niam, Khoirun, Fitriyah, Ries Dyah, & Insiyah, Aslichatul. (2023). PKM Sosialisasi Tanggap Bencana Dan Pengelolaan Berkelanjutan Dalam Upaya Menjaga Wisata Alam Di Desa Gosari. *Guyub Journal of Community Engagement*, 4(3), 461–478. <https://doi.org/10.33650/guyub.v4i3.7199>
- Alkadafi, Muammar, Safiah, Safiah, & Desmiwar, Devi. (2019). Analisis Kepemimpinan Kepala Desa Dalam Pengelolaan Desa (Studi Kasus Kampung Berumbung Baru Kecamatan Dayun Kabupaten Siak Provinsi Riau. *Jurnal El-Riyasah*, 9(2), 39. <https://doi.org/10.24014/jel.v9i2.6784>
- Aquatama, Rio Pradana, Karsidi, Ravik, & Kartono, Drajat Tri. (2024). Peran Pemerintah Desa Rendeng Dalam Pengembangan Desa Wisata Edukasi Gerabah Di Desa Rendeng, Kecamatan Malo, Kabupaten Bojonegoro. *Jurnal Teknik Industri Terintegrasi*, 7(1), 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jutin.v7i1.24340>
- Arifin, Nur. (2023). Politik Anggaran Desa: Keberpihakan Pemerintah Desa Terhadap Pengembangan Pemuda Karang Taruna Dalam APB Desa Kedungturi Kecamatan Taman Kabupaten Sidoarjo Tahun Anggaran 2018 Dan 2019. *Jp*, 3(2), 160–181. <https://doi.org/10.15642/politique.2023.3.2.160-181>
- Azzahra, Zidna, & Sugiarto, Sugiarto. (2022). Women's Participation in Coastal Community Empowerment Programs. *Prosperity Journal of Society and Empowerment*, 2(1), 24–34. <https://doi.org/10.21580/prosperity.2022.2.1.11138>
- Bahri, Khotimi. (2023). Efektivitas Karang Taruna Dalam Pemberdayaan Sumber Daya Manusia Di Kelurahan Babakan Kecamatan Cibeureum Kota Sukabumi. *Jurnal Dialektika Politik*, 7(1), 89–103. <https://doi.org/10.37949/jdp.v7i1.50>
- Cahyono, Heru, & Mufidayati, Kurniasih. (2021). Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Perencanaan Apbdes Sasakpanjang Kecamatan Tajurhalang Kabupaten Bogor. *Indonesian Treasury Review Jurnal Perbendaharaan Keuangan Negara Dan Kebijakan Publik*, 6(2), 173–194.

- <https://doi.org/10.33105/itrev.v6i2.176>
- Deniar, Shannaz Mutiara. (2021). Collaborative Governance Dalam Program Desa Percontohan Saemaul Undong Di Provinsi Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *Konstelasi Konvergensi Teknologi Dan Sistem Informasi*, 1(2), 233–244. <https://doi.org/10.24002/konstelasi.v1i2.4189>
- Effendi, Yulius Rustan, & Sahertian, Pieter. (2022). Kontruksi Peran Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah Berbasis Budaya Lonto Leok Dalam Penguatan Karakter Siswa. *Jamp Jurnal Administrasi Dan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 5(3), 214–226. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um027v5i32022p214>
- Egho, Febrianus T., Pradana, I. Putu Yoga Bumi, & Sayrani, Laurensius P. (2023). Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Desa Dalam Meningkatkan Partisipasi Masyarakat Pada Program Pembangunan Fisik Desa. *Publicness Journal of Public Administration Studies*, 2(4), 446–460. <https://doi.org/10.24036/publicness.v2i4.160>
- Fadli, Ricki. (2019). Partisipasi Pemuda Karang Taruna Mahardika Dalam Pembangunan Desa Jubel Kidul Kecamatan Sugio Kabupaten Lamongan. *Nurani Jurnal Kajian Syari Ah Dan Masyarakat*, 19(1), 91–102. <https://doi.org/10.19109/nurani.v19i1.3059>
- Farleni, Fenti, & Hanafi, Syadeli. (2023). Dampak Kepemimpinan Transformasional Terhadap Inovasi Dan Sehatnya Organisasi (Studi Di Desa Kadubeureum Kecamatan Padarincang Kabupaten Serang). *Entrepreneur Jurnal Bisnis Manajemen Dan Kewirausahaan*, 4(03), 213–227. <https://doi.org/10.31949/entrepreneur.v4i03.6034>
- Firman, Andi Ansar. (2021). Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Di Desa Berbasis Komunitas: Review Literatur. *Jurnal Ilmiah Tata Sejuta Stia Mataram*, 7(1), 132–146. <https://doi.org/10.32666/tatasejuta.v7i1.196>
- Firmansyah, Very Sukma, Syarif, Encep, & Ruyadi, Yadi. (2021). Youth Leadership Character Development at the Karang Taruna Organization in Karawang West Java. *Tadbir Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan*, 5(2), 279. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jsmp.v5i2.3928>
- Fitriyana, Desi. (2023). *Lingkup Dan Tahapan Kegiatan Pemberdayaan*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/abg3r>
- Fitriyana, Fitriyana, Astuti, Henny Widya, Rahman, Abdul, Werdiningsih, Rini, & Idrus, S. Ali Jadid Al. (2023). Servant Leadership and Perceived Organizational Support for Lecturer Loyalty Through Empowerment. *Tafkir Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(1), 113–127. <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v4i1.318>
- Holilah, Holilah, & Ismail, Muchammad. (2022). Pandangan Masyarakat Tentang Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Desa Berpendidikan Sarjana Dan Bukan Sarjana Di Madura. *Jurnal Politique*, 2(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.15642/politique.2022.2.2.101-118>
- Iskndar, Riska Aditya Putri. (2023). *Managers as Leaders*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/8ufnv>
- Islam, M. Rezaul. (2017). Non-Governmental Organisation Global Community Empowerment Projects in Bangladesh: How Do These Fit the Local Context? *Local Economy the Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit*, 32(7), 763–777. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094217734817>
- Kiyato, Putri Larasati, Purwanto, Danang, & Budiati, Atik Catur. (2024). Tepisari Village Government Strategies in Increasing Community Participation in Development Programs. *Santhet (Jurnal Sejarah Pendidikan Dan Humaniora)*, 8(1), 384–392. <https://doi.org/10.36526/santhet.v8i1.3659>
- Mafriningsianti, Evi, & Setiadi, Sandi. (2026). OPTIMIZING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN ADDRESSING URBAN ISSUES IN BEKASI. 3(3).

- Martí, Joan Andrés Traver, Ballesteros-Velázquez, Belén, Ozerinjauregi, Nagore, & Máiquez, María del Carmen Cerezo. (2021). Leading the Curriculum Towards Social Change: Distributed Leadership and the Inclusive School. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 51(3), 554–574. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143221991849>
- Maulana, Rizky, Alhidayatullah, Alhidayatullah, & Setiadi, Sandi. (2025). MSME Sustainability Strategy Through the Application of Digital Marketing and Product Innovation in the VUCA Era: A Study of SMEs in Sukabumi City. *International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting (IJEMA)*, 3(4 SE-Articles), 366–383. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ijema.v3i4.346>
- Mihaela, Tănase. (2021). *The Impact of Leadership on Innovation in Organizations*. <https://doi.org/10.33422/2nd.icrmanagement.2021.02.44>
- Mohulaingo, Mahmud, Podungge, Robiyati, & Bokingo, Agus Hakri. (2022). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Transformasional Terhadap Peningkatan Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Pembangunan Fisik Desa Pilohayanga, Kecamatan Telaga, Kabupaten Gorontalo. *Jambura Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Dan Bisnis*, 5(1), 109–115. <https://doi.org/10.37479/jimb.v5i1.14253>
- Mouchrek, Najla, & Benson, Mark. (2023). The Theory of Integrated Empowerment in the Transition to Adulthood: Concepts and Measures. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.893898>
- Mulyasari, Runavia, Maizida, Karlina, & Purwandani, Intan. (2024). Peran Komunitas Seni Dan Budaya Dalam Pengembangan Desa Mandiri Budaya Di Desa Ekowisata Pancoh. *Tourisma Jurnal Pariwisata*, 5(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.22146/gamajts.v5i1.87338>
- Ningsih, Halimatus Syadiyah, & Ma'rif, Muhammad Farid. (2023). Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Pengembangan Kampung Edukasi Sampah Di Kelurahan Sekardangan Kecamatan Sidoarjo Kabupaten Sidoarjo. *Publika*, 1835–1848. <https://doi.org/10.26740/publika.v11n2.p1835-1848>
- Nusantara, Widya, Roesminingsih, M. V, Siswanto, Heru, & Widyaswari, Monica. (2022). Peningkatan Kapasitas Karang Taruna Desa Temu Melalui Design Thinking Process. *Community Development Journal Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 3(3), 2107–2116. <https://doi.org/10.31004/cdj.v3i3.10344>
- Patrianti, Tria, Adawiyah, Sa'diyah El, & Hermanto, Agus. (2023). Pelibatan Pemuda Dalam Memperkuat Komunikasi Kebijakan Transisi Energi Dan Presidensi G-20. *Swatantra*, 21(2), 207. <https://doi.org/10.24853/swatantra.21.2.207-212>
- Petriello, Michael A., Redmore, Lauren, Sène-Harper, Aby, Katju, Dhananjaya, Barraclough, Lilian, Boyd, Sara, Madge, Carly, Papadopoulos, Anastasia, & Yalamala, Reddi Sekhara. (2024). The Scope of Empowerment for Conservation and Communities. *Conservation Biology*, 39(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14249>
- Pilaili, Mila, Pusparini, Herlina, & Nurabiah, Nurabiah. (2022). Peranan Kepemimpinan Kepala Desa Untuk Meningkatkan Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Pembangunan Fisik Desa. *Jurnal Ilmiah Tata Sejuta Stia Mataram*, 8(2), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.32666/tatasejuta.v8i2.322>
- Prakoso, Sugih, & Setiadi, Sandi. (2026). *DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGY: HOW BIG DATA SAVES TOURIST DESTINATIONS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION*. 2(2), 404–415.
- Pratama, Febri Fajar, & Rahmat, Rahmat. (2018). Peran Karang Taruna Dalam Mewujudkan Tanggung Jawab Sosial Pemuda Sebagai Gerakan Warga Negara. *Jurnal Civics Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan*, 15(2), 170–179. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jc.v15i2.19182>
- Sapitri, Sri, & Alexandro, Rinto. (2021). Pengelolaan Alokasi Dana Desa Dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat. *Jurnal Mediasosian Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Administrasi Negara*, 5(2), 239.

<https://doi.org/10.30737/mediasosian.v5i2.1786>

- Saputra, Putra Pratama, Aisyah, Siti, & Darmanto, Darmanto. (2021). Analisis Perencanaan Pembangunan Partisipatif Di Desa Pemekaran Sebagai Perwujudan Demokratisasi Ditingkat Lokal (Suatu Studi Pada Desa Pemekaran Di Kecamatan Mendo Barat, Kabupaten Bangka). *JWP (Jurnal Wacana Politik)*, 6(1), 74. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jwp.v6i1.32304>
- Sedia, I. Wayan. (2021). Kepemimpinan Kepala Desa Dalam Pengelolaan Program 2019 Untuk Pelayanan Publik Di Desa Taro Kecamatan Tegallalang Kabupaten Gianyar (Kajian Komunikasi Politik). *Jurnal Ilmiah Cakrawarti*, 4(1), 85–93. <https://doi.org/10.47532/jic.v4i1.238>
- Sembiring, Ruth Agnesia, & Agustin, Mayang. (2023). Pemberdayaan Purna Pekerja Migran Indonesia Secara Partisipatif Untuk Mengurangi Pengangguran Di Desa Karangpatihan Kabupaten Ponorogo. *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Administrasi Publik Dan Ilmu Komunikasi (Jipikom)*, 5(1), 26–40. <https://doi.org/10.31289/jipikom.v5i1.1478>
- Setiadi, Sandi, Alhidayatullah, & Maulana, Rizky. (2025). *Towards the Sustainability of Food MSMEs through Strengthened Collaboration and Competitiveness*. 3(4), 331–345.
- Setiadi, Sandi. (2026). *Enhancing Customer Loyalty: The Mediating Effect of Experience on Usability, Security, and Content Quality with Digital Literacy Moderation*. 14(1), 1513–1526. <https://doi.org/10.37641/jimkes.v14i1.4909>
- Setiadi, Sandi, Alhidayatullah, Alhidayatullah, & Maulana, Rizky. (2025). Towards the Sustainability of Food MSMEs through Strengthened Collaboration and Competitiveness. *International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting (IJEMA)*, 3(4 SE-Articles), 331–345. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ijema.v3i4.341>
- Setiadi, Sandi, Widyastuti, Sri, Zulkifli, & Darmansyah. (2025). Sustainable nature tourism transformation: The strategic role of green tourism in West Java. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 9(3), 1544–1569. <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v9i3.5599>
- Setianingsi, Eka, Nastia, Nastia, & Basir, Muh Askal. (2022). Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Program Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga Di Kelurahan Wandoka Kabupaten Wakatobi. *Journal of Government Science Studies*, 1(2), 77–85. <https://doi.org/10.30598/jgssvol1issue2page77-85>
- Sitakar, Sandhi Sada Arih, & Rangkuti, Zoraya Alfathin. (2024). Tata Kelola Program CSR Melalui Collaborative Governance. *Jurnal Kebijakan Publik*, 15(2), 238. <https://doi.org/10.31258/jkp.v15i2.8498>
- Sukmayadi, Qolbi Mujahidillah Adzimat, & Asyahidda, Fajar Nugraha. (2024). Sustainable Agriculture: Empowering Youth Organization Through the Modernization of Forage Technology in Desa Ganjarsari. *Society Jurnal Pengabdian Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 4(2), 95–103. <https://doi.org/10.37802/society.v4i2.450>
- Wali, Wali Ja'far Shudiq, Rukmana, Diana Indri, & Ningsih, Nilawati. (2024). Pendampingan Untuk Meningkatkan Potensi Karang Taruna Desa Binor Dalam Peluang Bisnis Di Era Teknologi Informasi. *Nusantara Journal of Community Engagement and Empowerment*, 1(2), 52–58. <https://doi.org/10.36564/njcee.v1i2.17>
- Yimam, Mohammed Hassen. (2022). Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Commitment in Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia. *Teaching Public Administration*, 41(3), 303–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01447394211058079>

